

THE BOOK OF

# Mr. Natural



BY R. CRUMB

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

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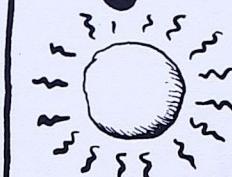
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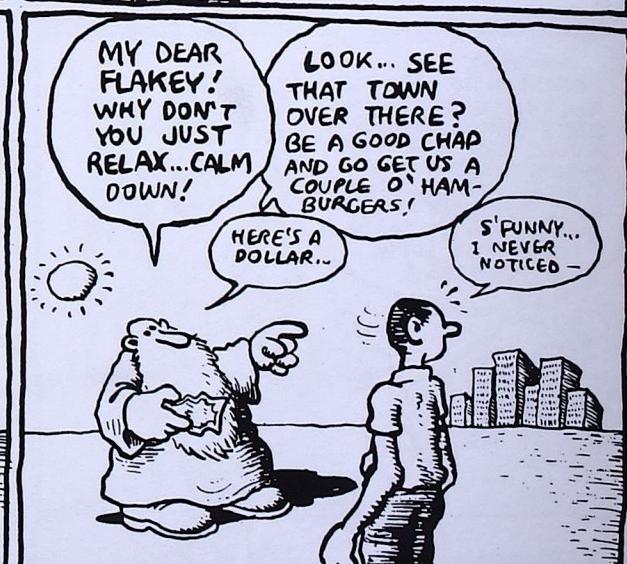
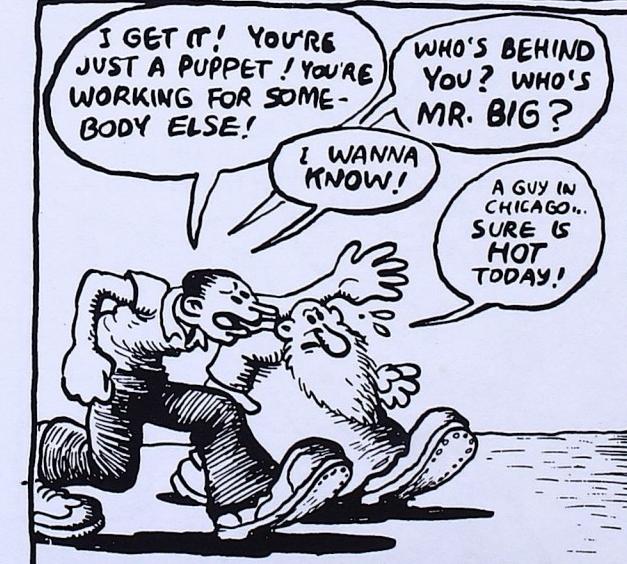
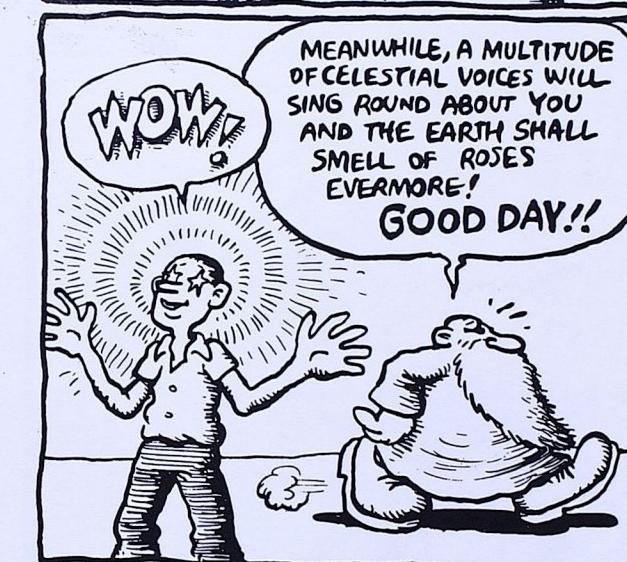
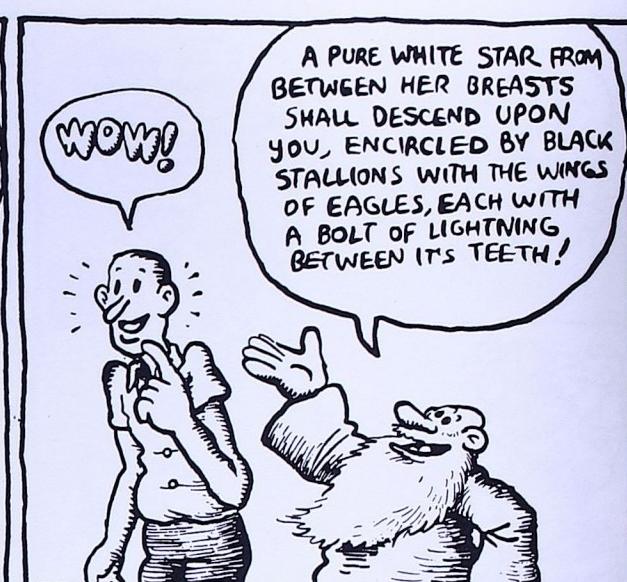
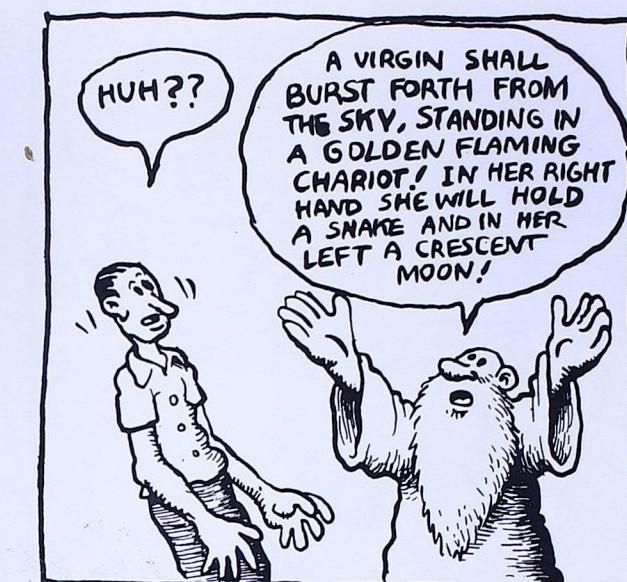
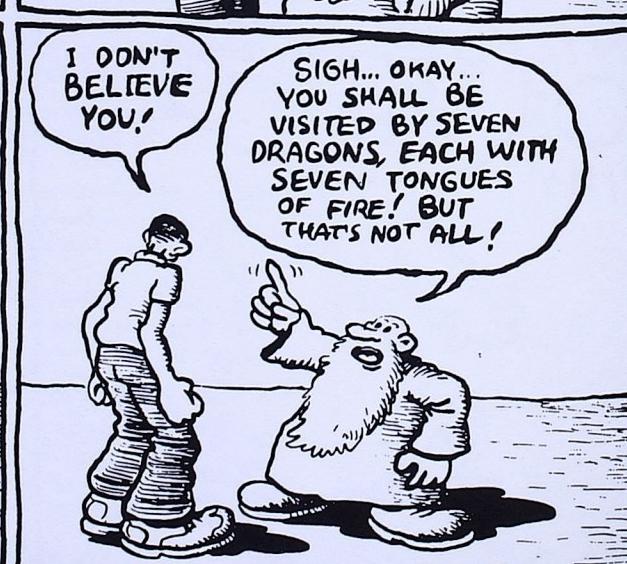
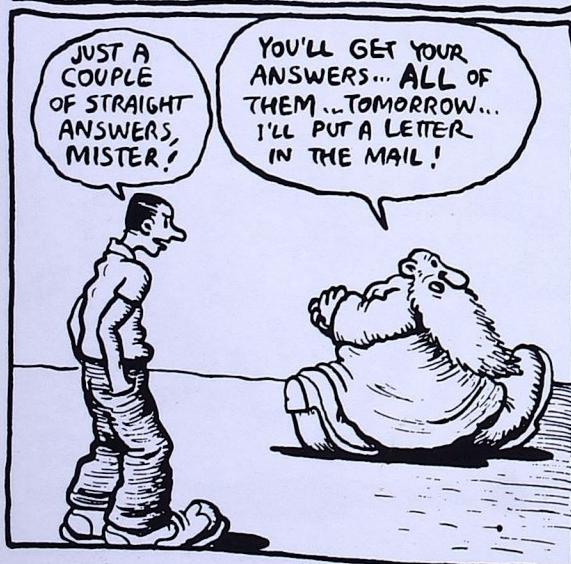
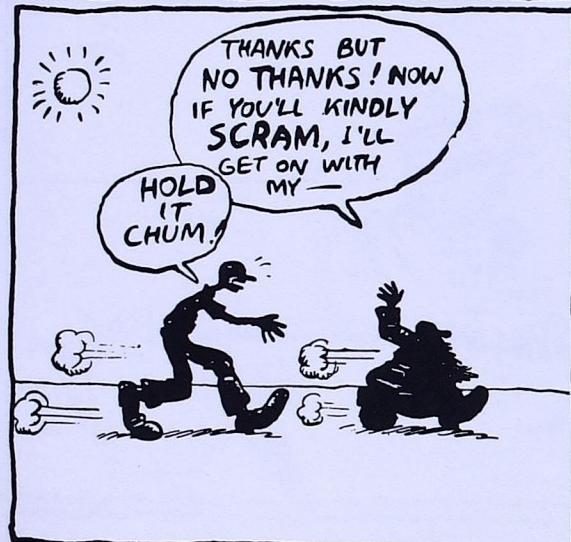
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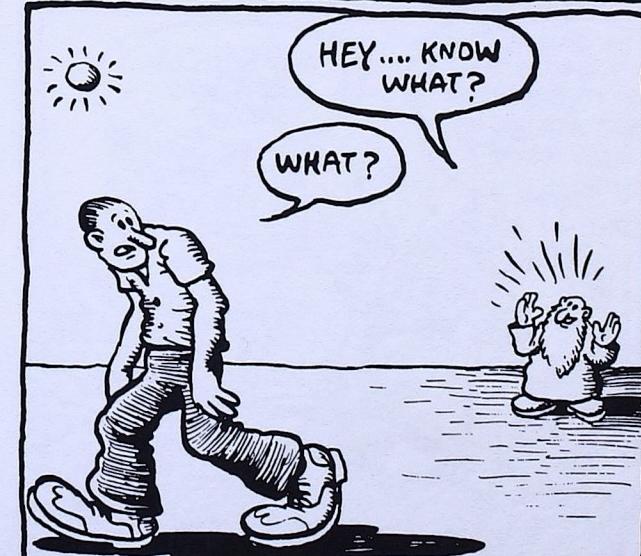
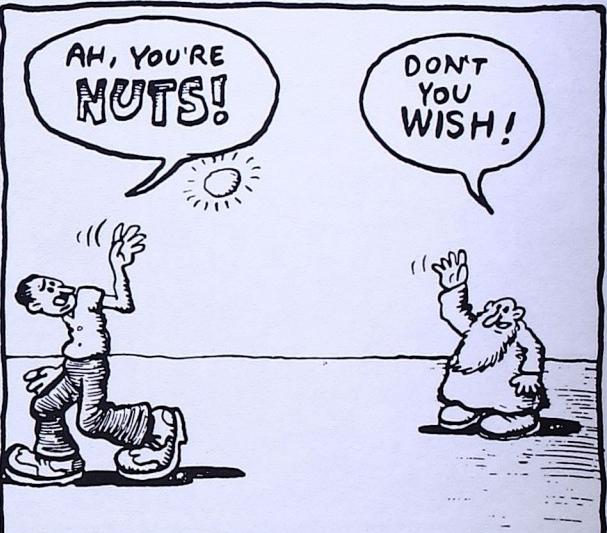
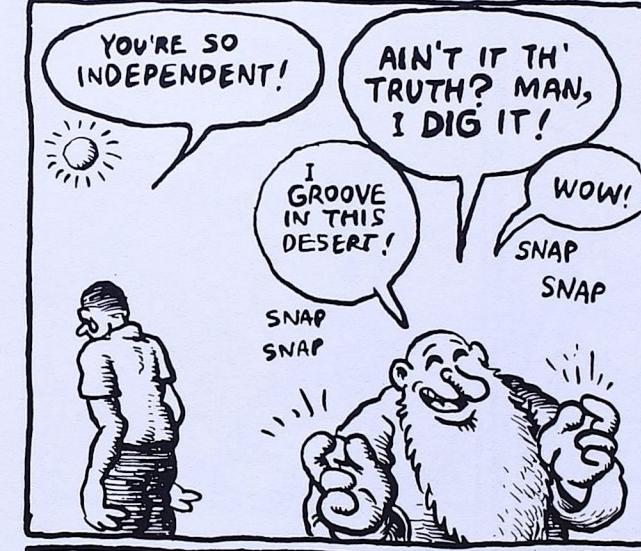
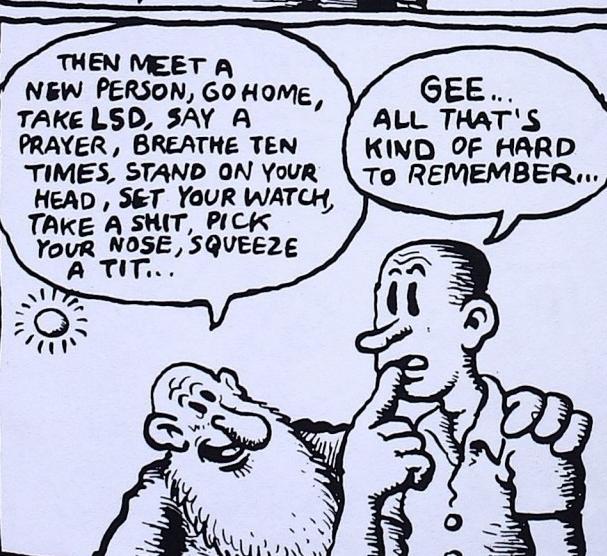
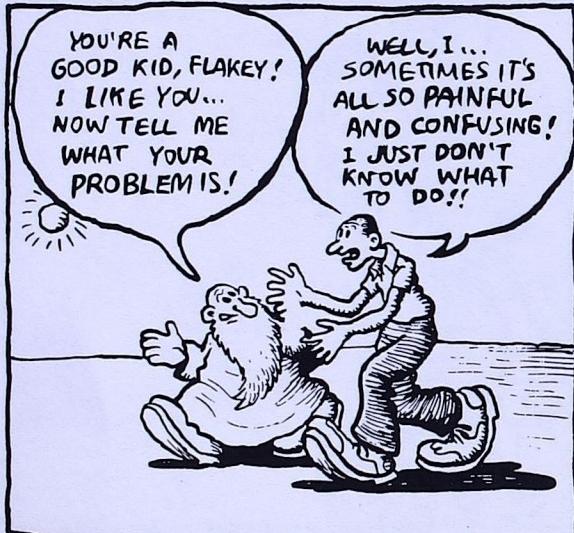
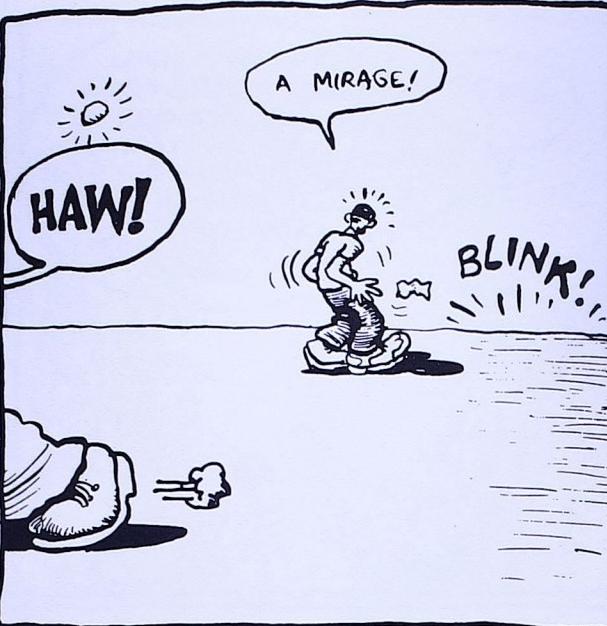
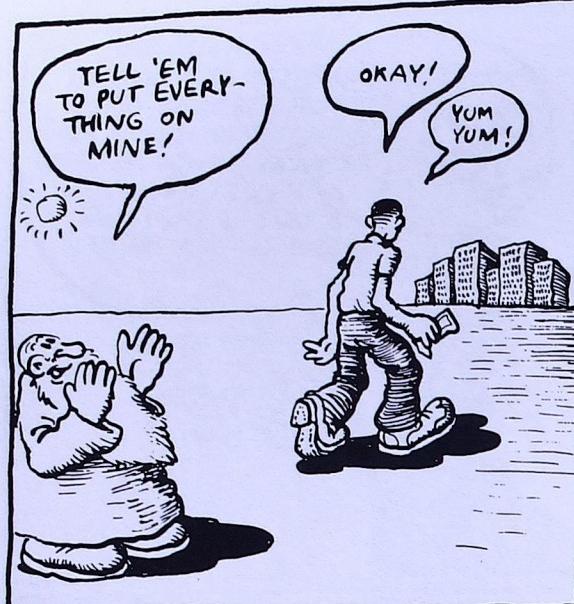
# Mr. Natural in Death Valley



THE GREAT MAN  
(AN EX-TAXICAB DRIVER  
FROM AFGHANISTAN)  
HAS BEEN MEDITATING  
IN THE DESERT  
FOR FORTY DAYS!  
HOW DOES HE DO IT!?







THE END

# Mr Natural

## "visits the city"

YES, HE'S BACK IN TOWN... JUST TO SEE ALL HIS OLD FRIENDS WHO ARE STILL AROUND. MAYBE HE'LL EVEN DROP IN ON YOU!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE WONDERING WHY I ASKED YOU TO COME OVER TONIGHT...

NOT AT ALL, MY BOY!

OH, I CAN TELL... I HAVE MY WAYS!

I'LL BET! I'M WELL AWARE THAT YOU CAN READ MY THOUGHTS... SOMETIMES IT SCARES ME!

HIDING SOMETHING PERHAPS? HMM... YOUR SEX PROBLEM MUST BE BOTHERING YOU AGAIN!

OH GOD!

YOU WANT TO SIT AROUND AND TALK ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS. WE WILL PROCEED TO FILL THOUSANDS OF DIALOGUE BALLOONS SQUABBLING OVER YOUR NEVER-ENDING -

...OH NEVERMIND! YOU'RE WORKING YOURSELF INTO A SNIT ALREADY!

MY NEVER-ENDING WHAT, WISE GUY??

...I FREAK OUT EVERYTIME YOU BRING UP THAT... SEX BUSINESS... IT'S ALL SO... SO...

I KNOW... MESSY! COMPLICATED... CONFUSING... BUT LOOK!

WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S HAPPENING, IT KEEPS ON HAPPENING NO MATTER WHAT! RIGHT?

WOW! YES! THAT'S EXACTLY-

QUEST INTO THE UNKNOWN!

IS THAT SO TERRIBLE?

OF COURSE NOT... USED TO DO IT MYSELF.... SAY, ARE YOU ON ACID AGAIN?

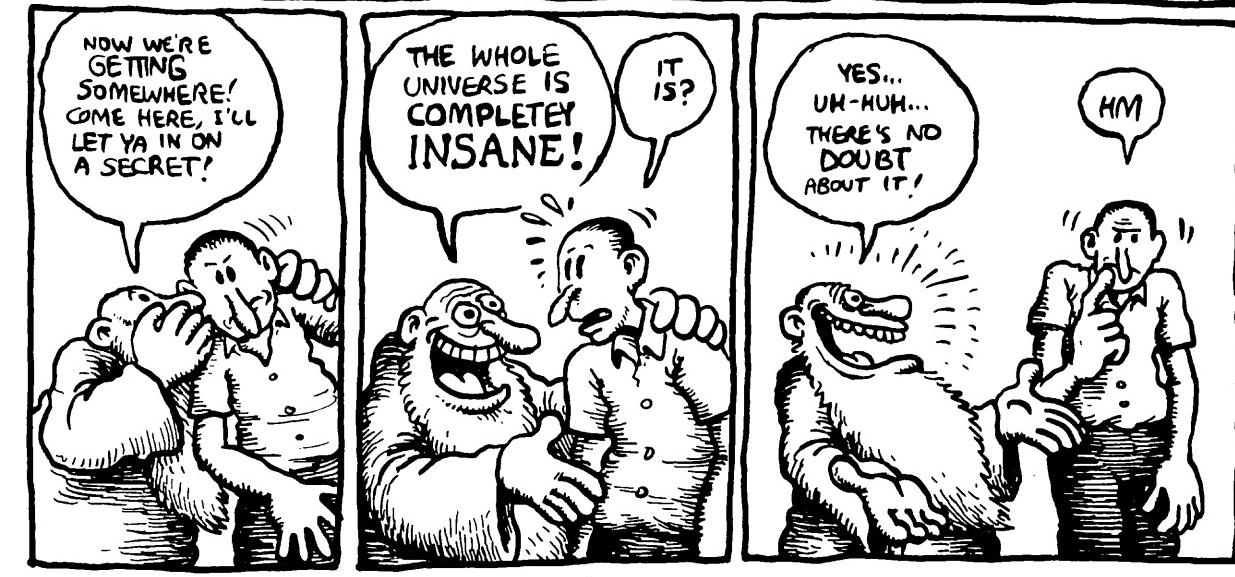
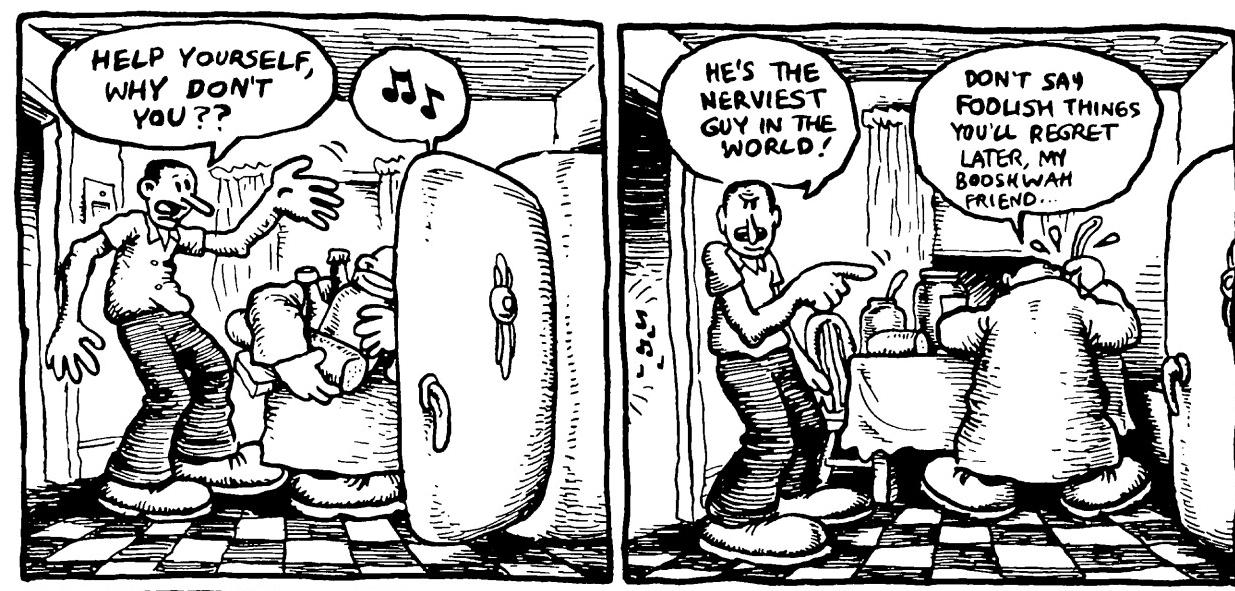
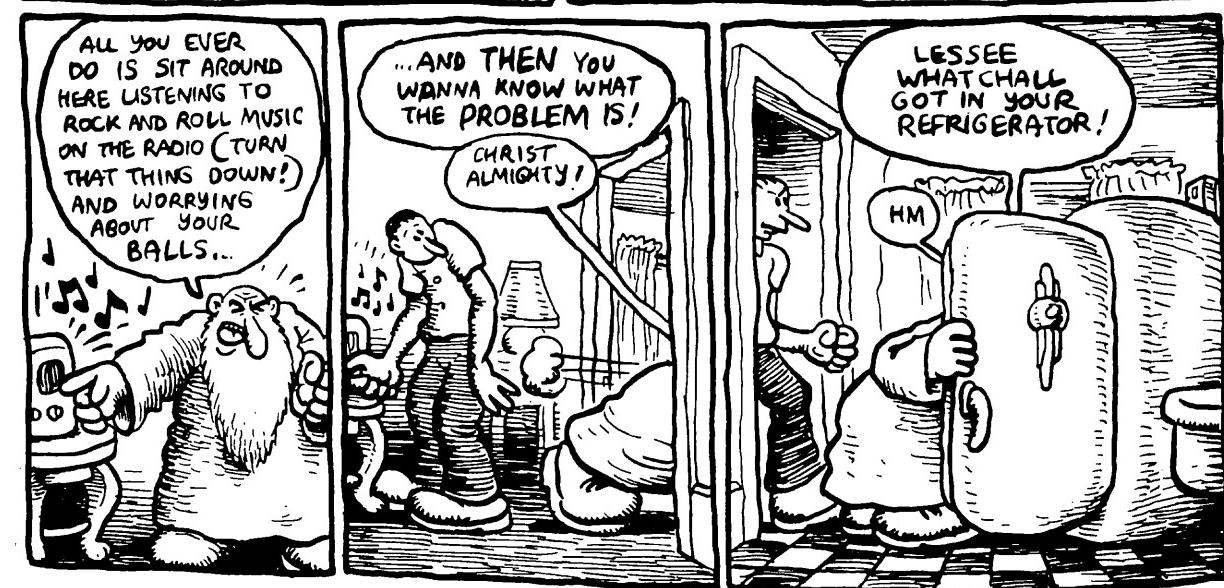
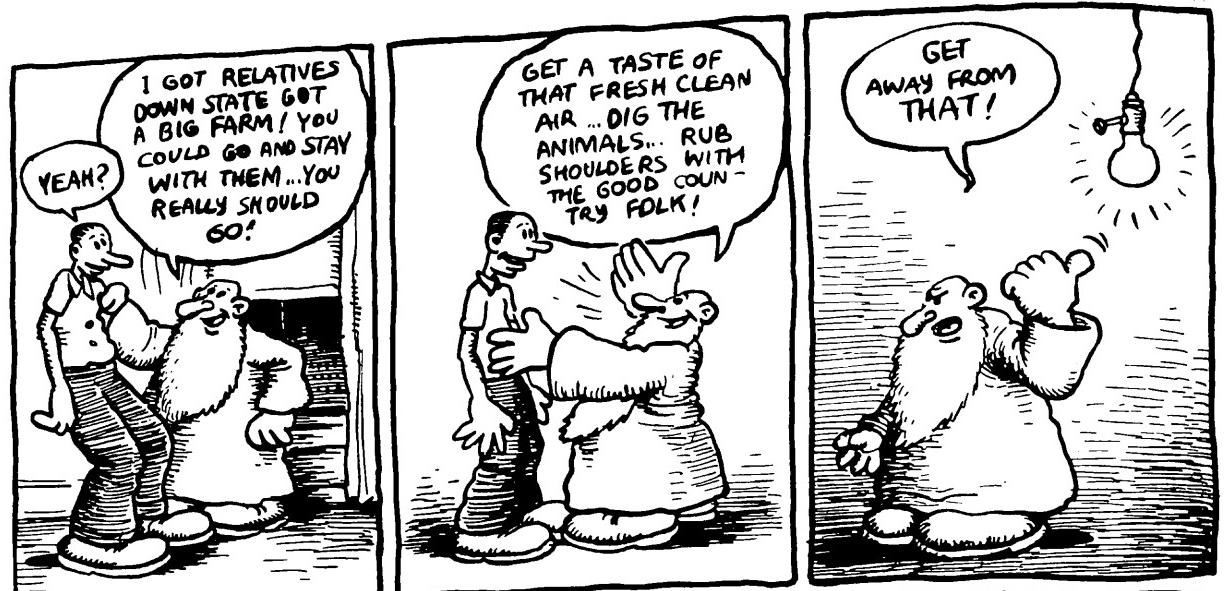
ER... WELL... YES... HOW'D YOU KNOW?

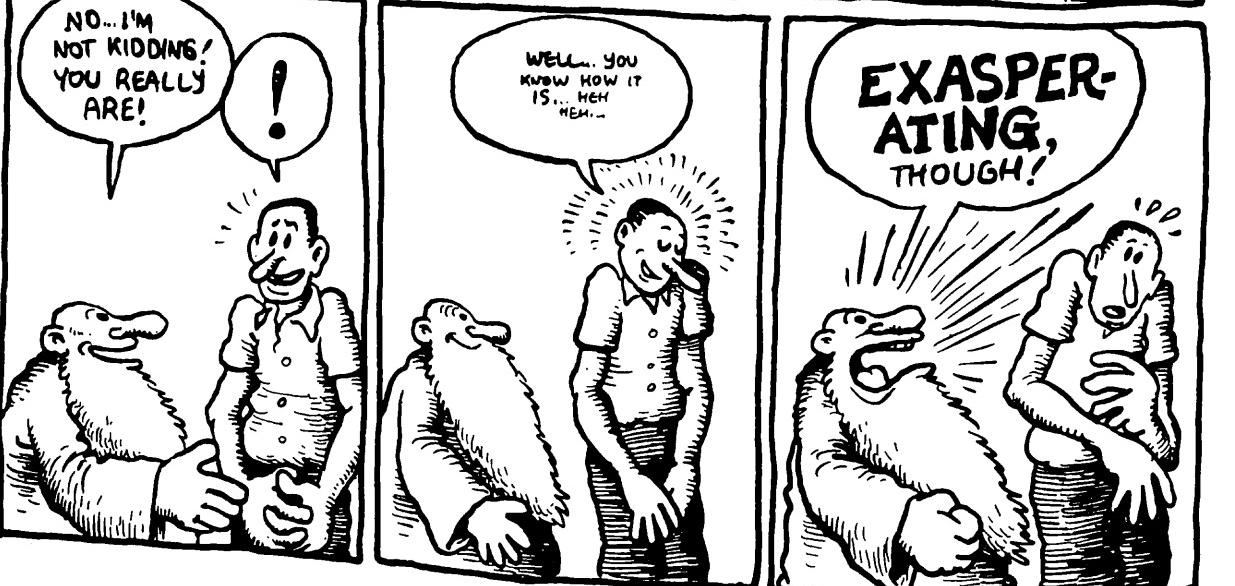
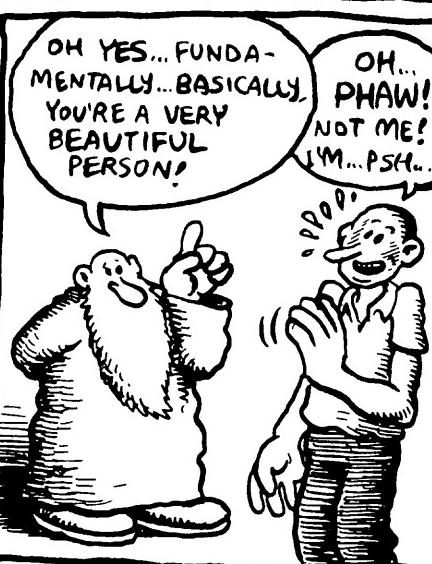
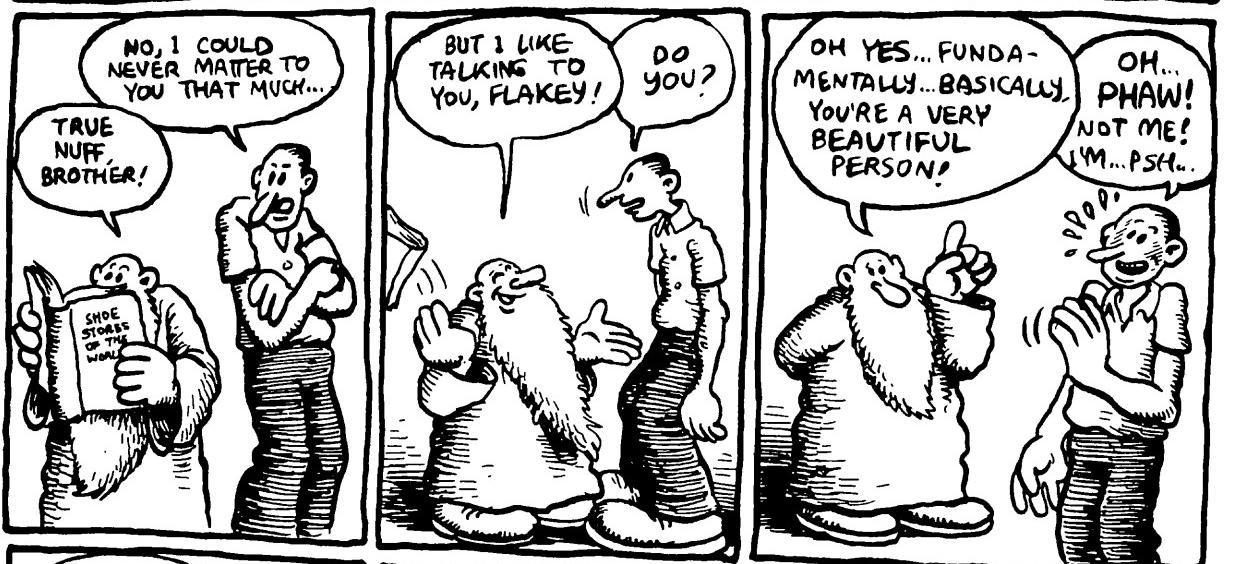
IT'S LIKE... I MEAN... YOU...

LOST IT AGAIN!

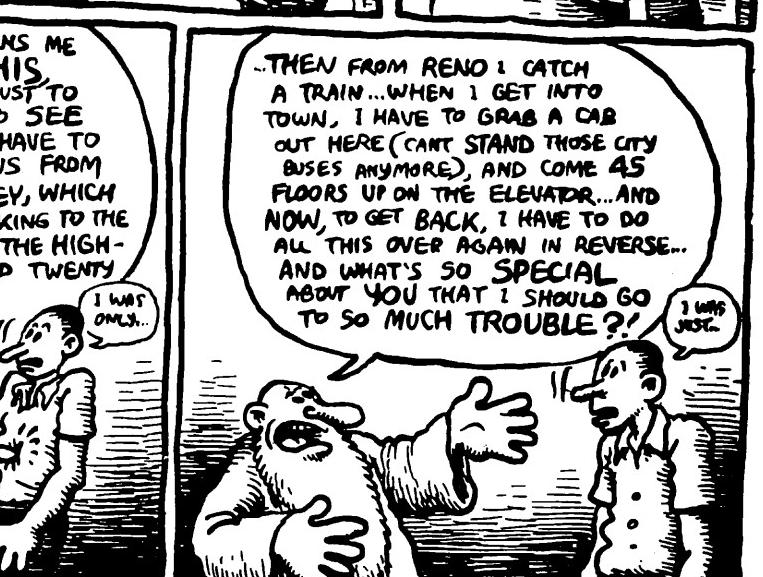
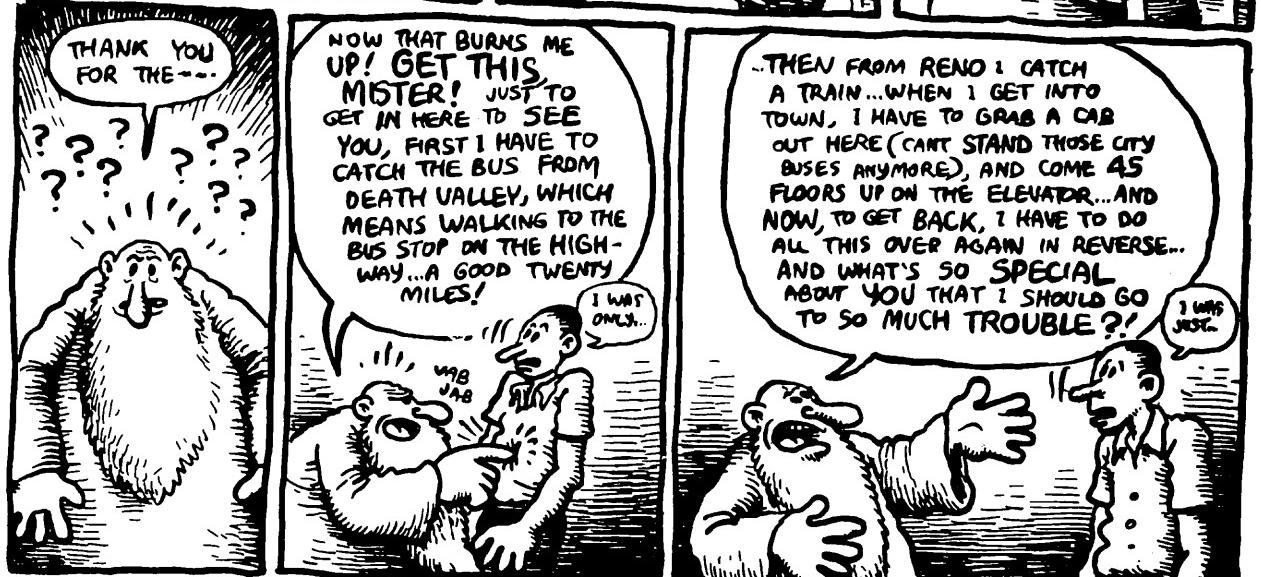
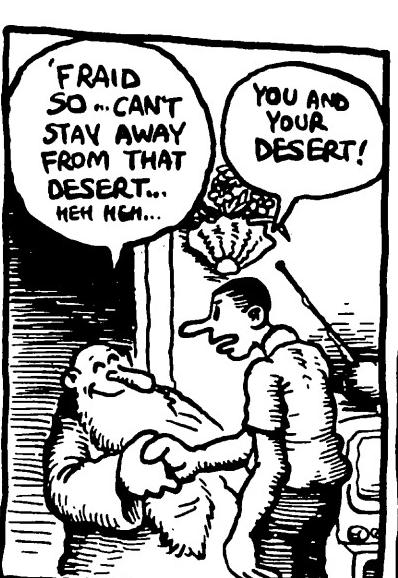
YOU CITY PEOPLE ARE ALL THE SAME... TELL YOU WHAT, FLAKEY FOONT...

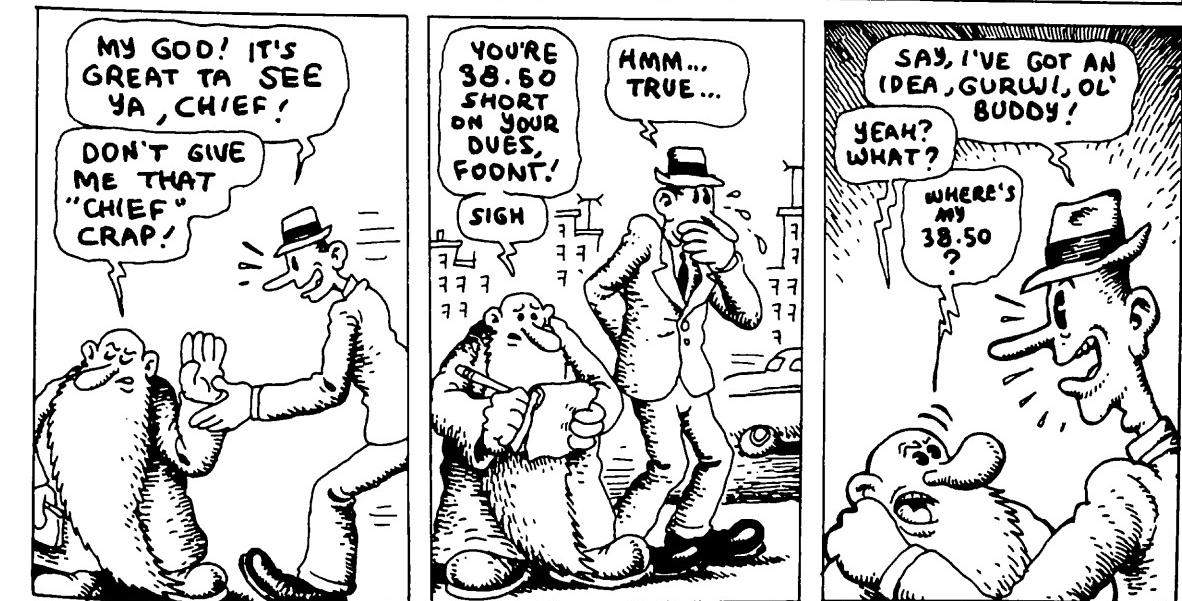
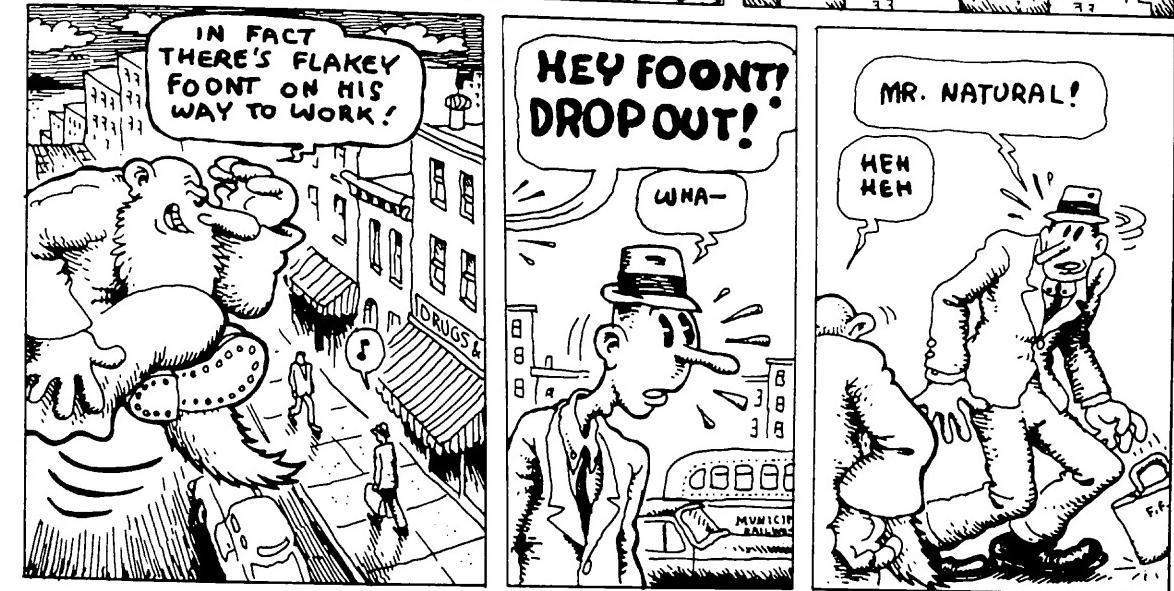
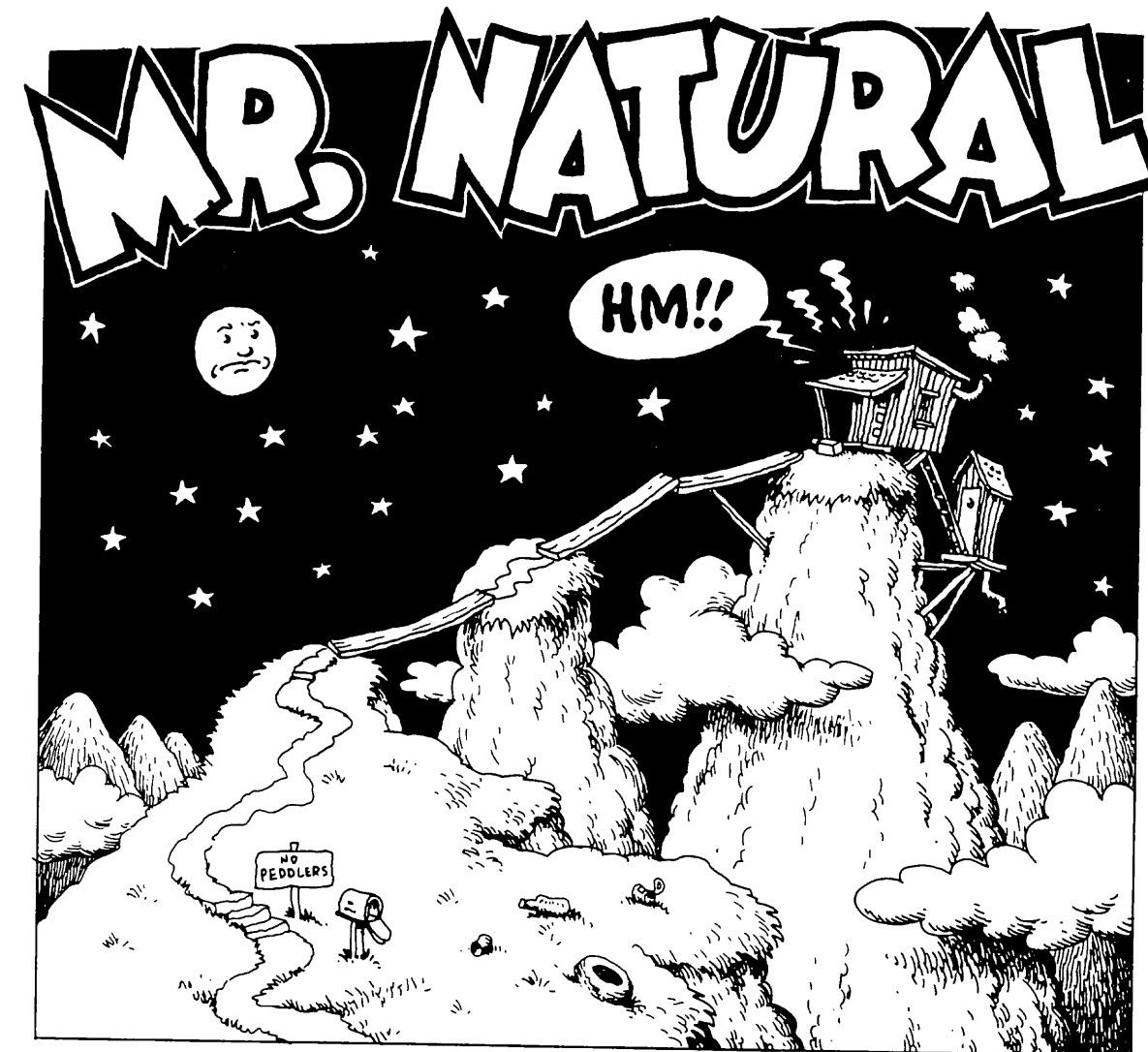
WHAT?

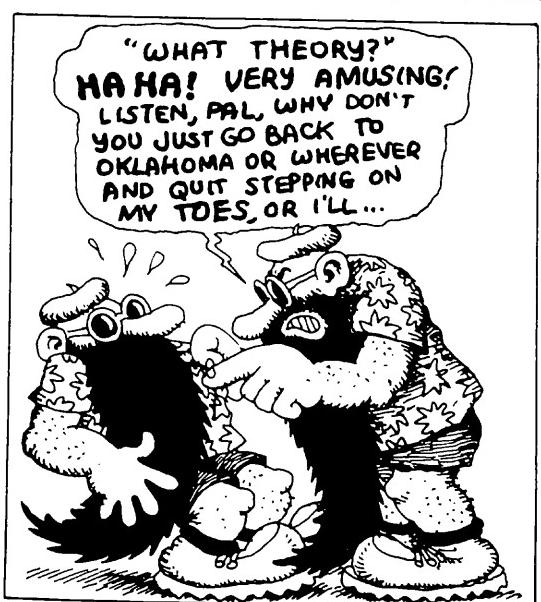
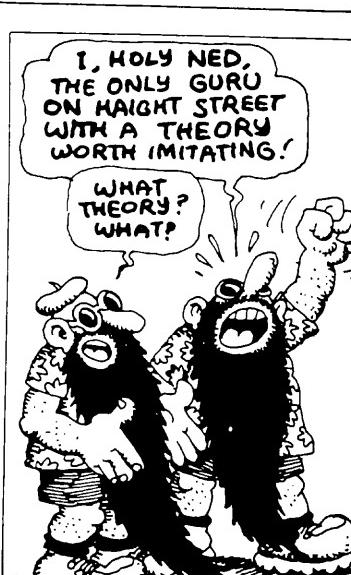
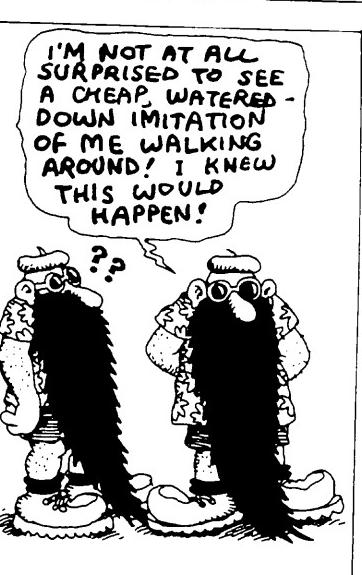
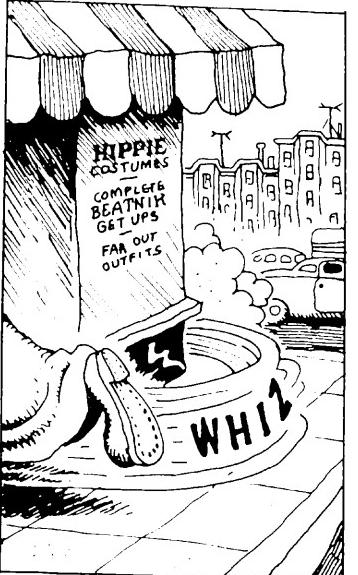
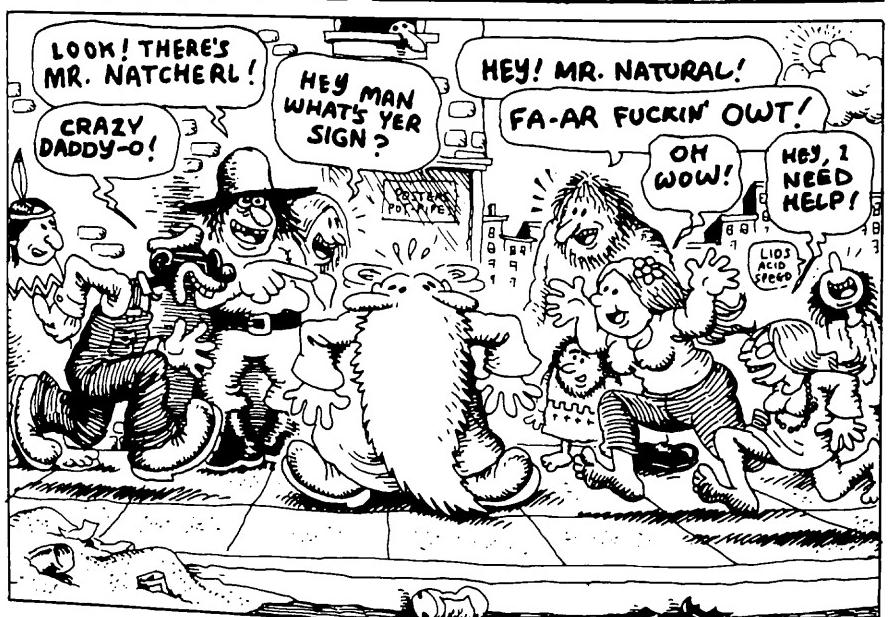
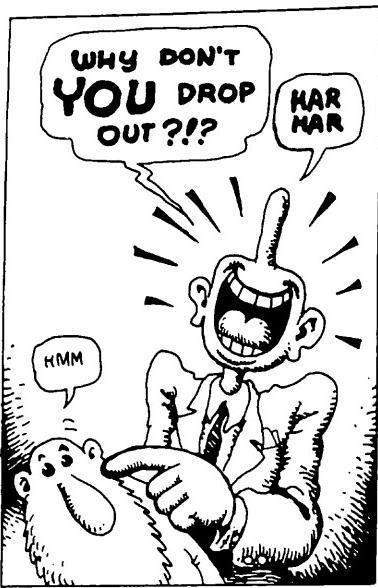


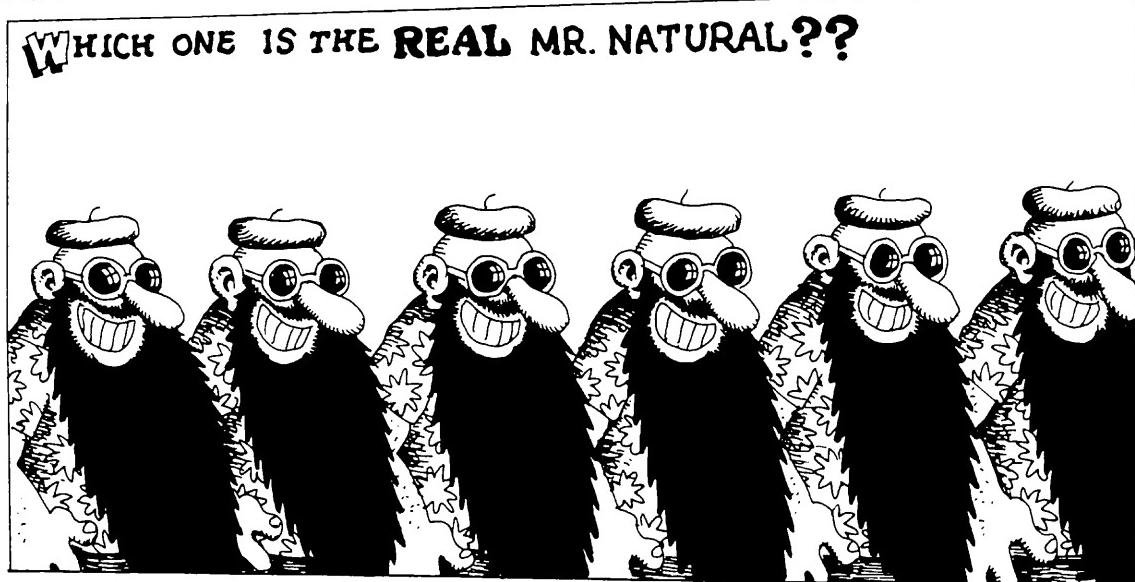


EXASPERATING, THOUGH!





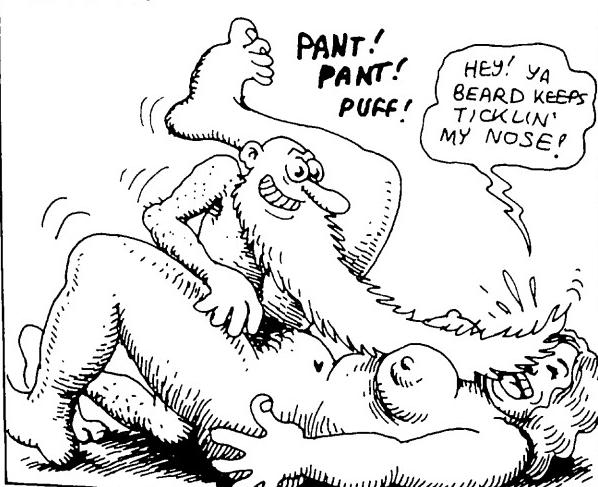


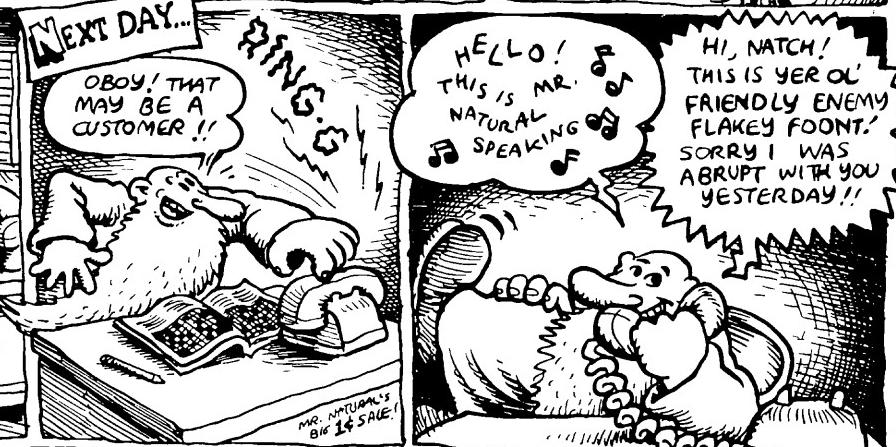
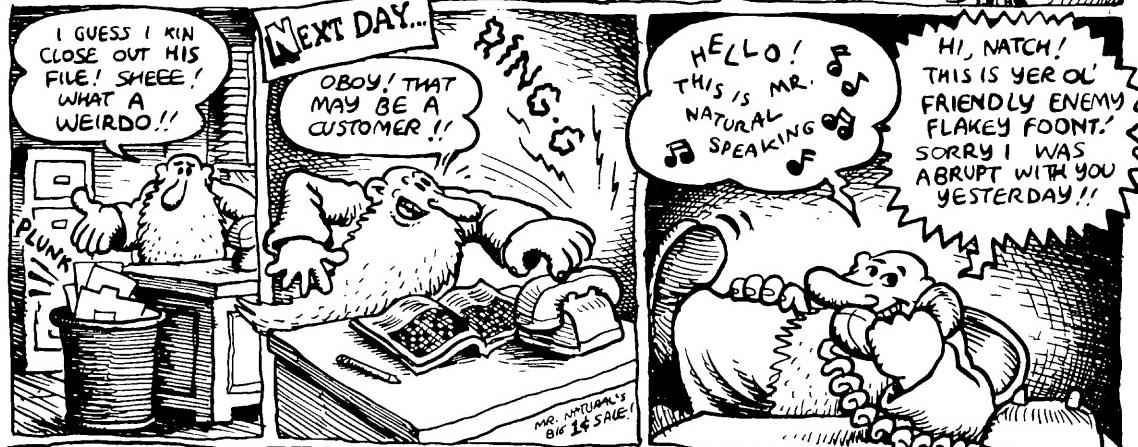
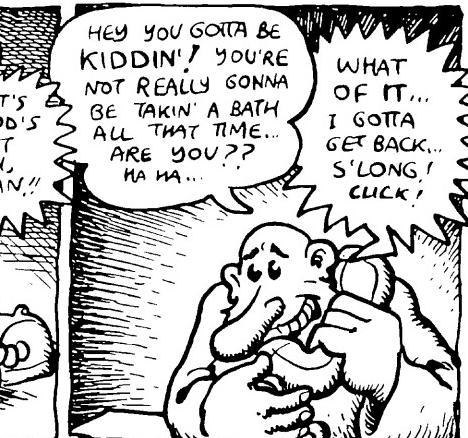
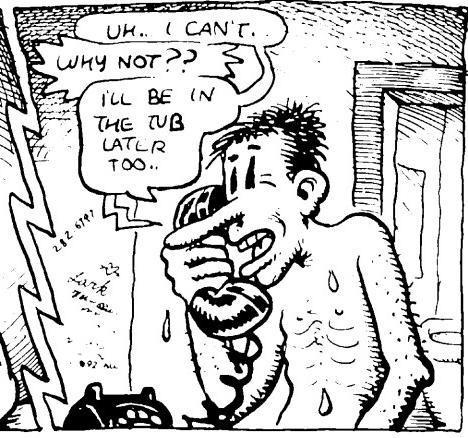
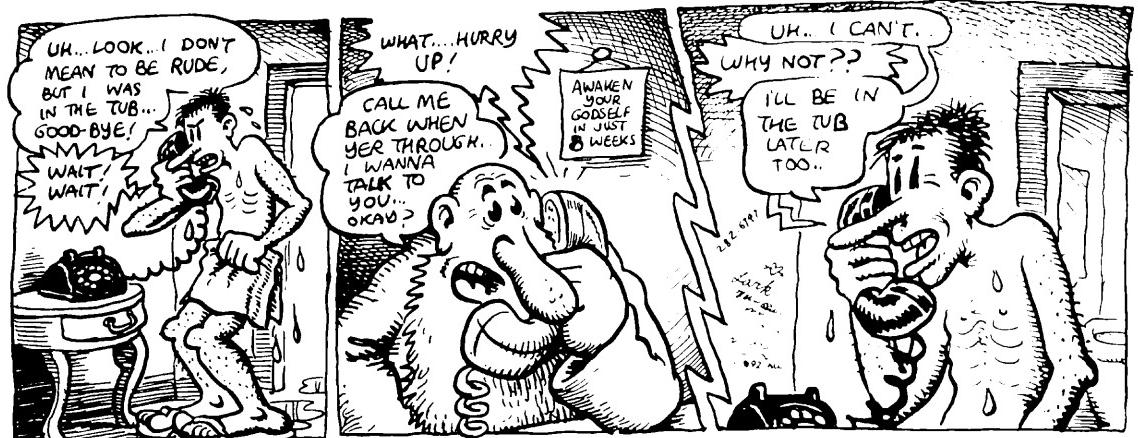


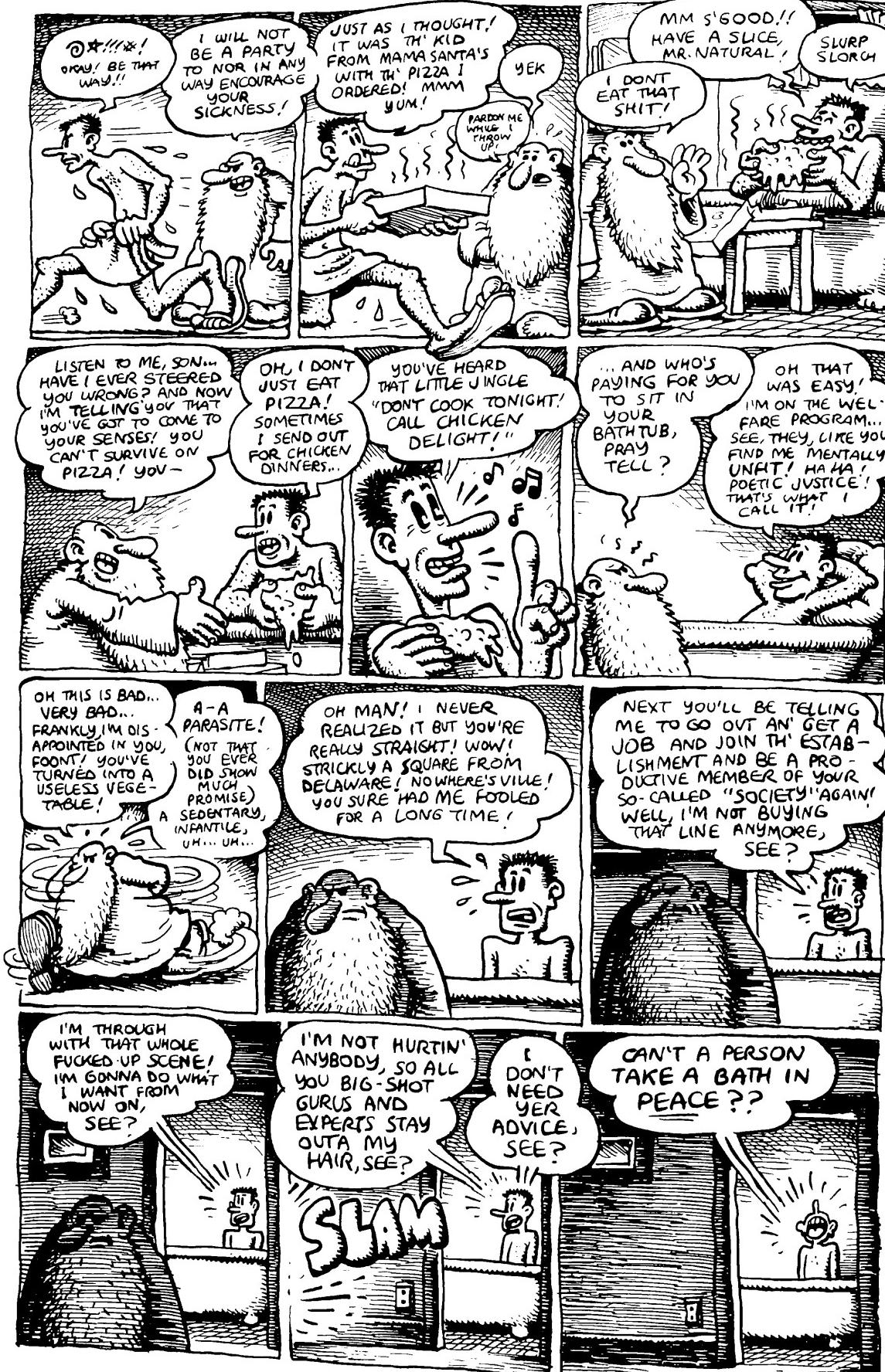
NONE OF THEM!! MR. NATURAL SPLIT AND WENT BACK TO HIS OLD SELF! ALL THE CHICKS ON HAIGHT STREET REALLY GOT THEIR MINDS MESSED BY THAT OLD FART!

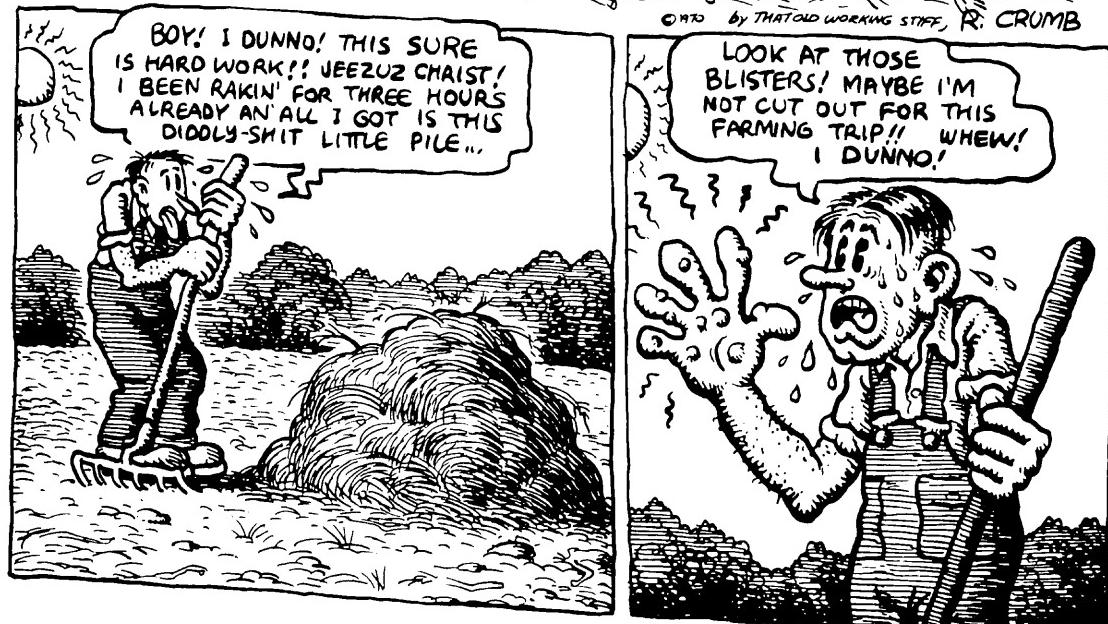
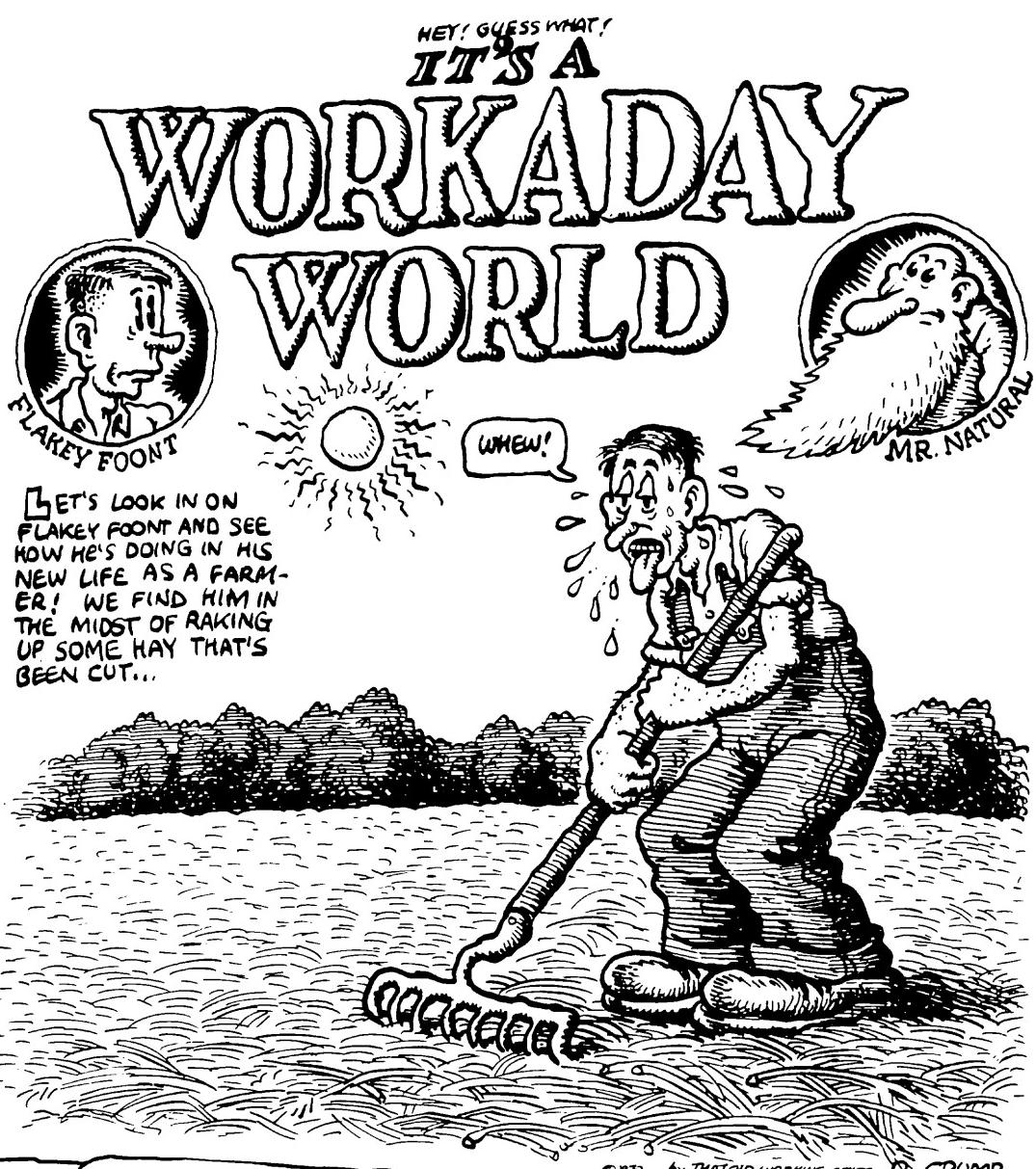


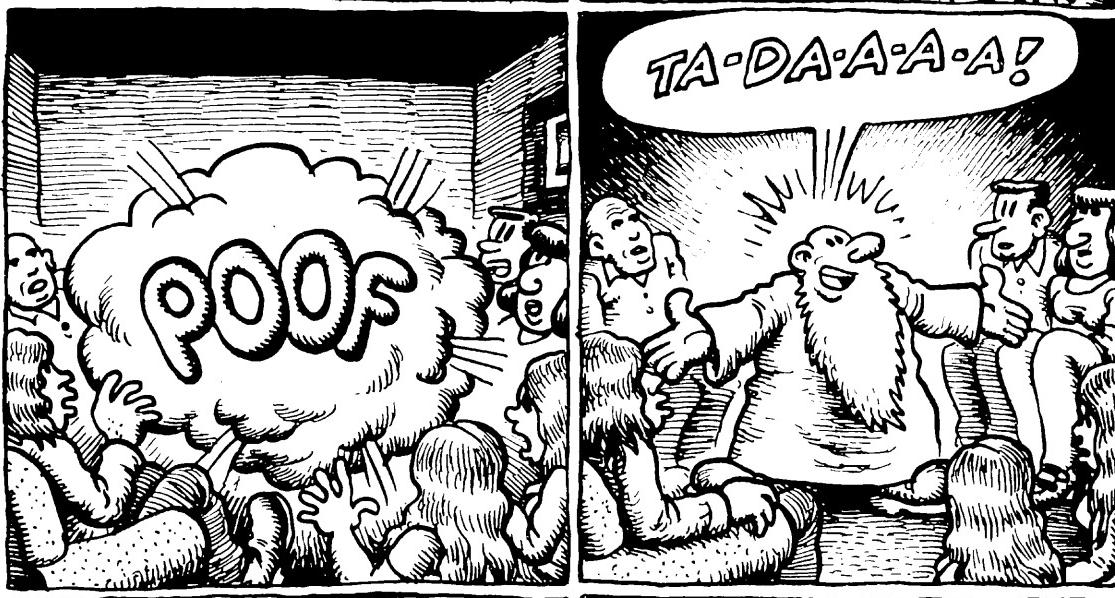
NOW HE'S MR. "SNATCHERAL"! YOU NEVER SAW SUCH A HORNY OLD GEEZER!













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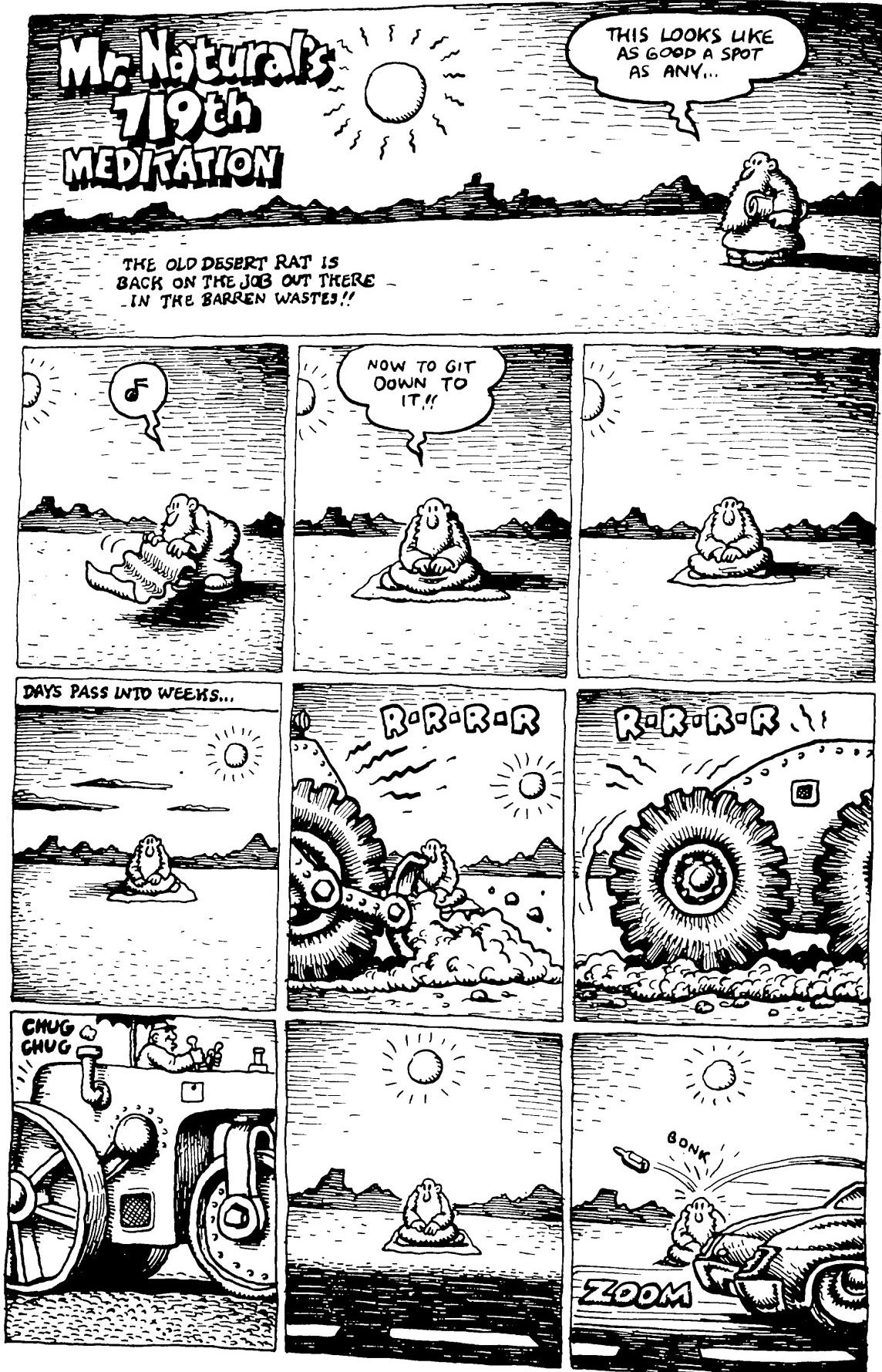
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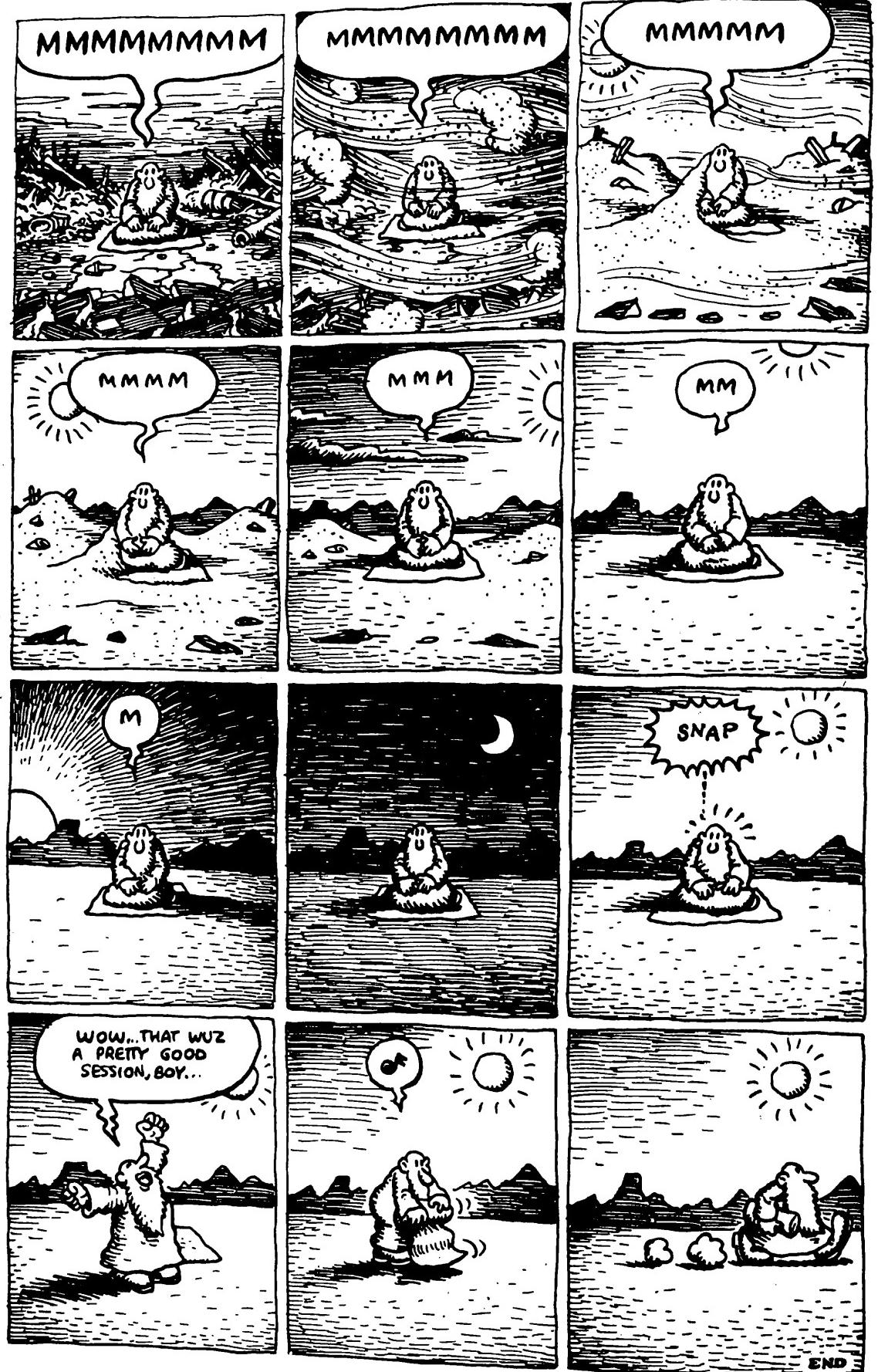


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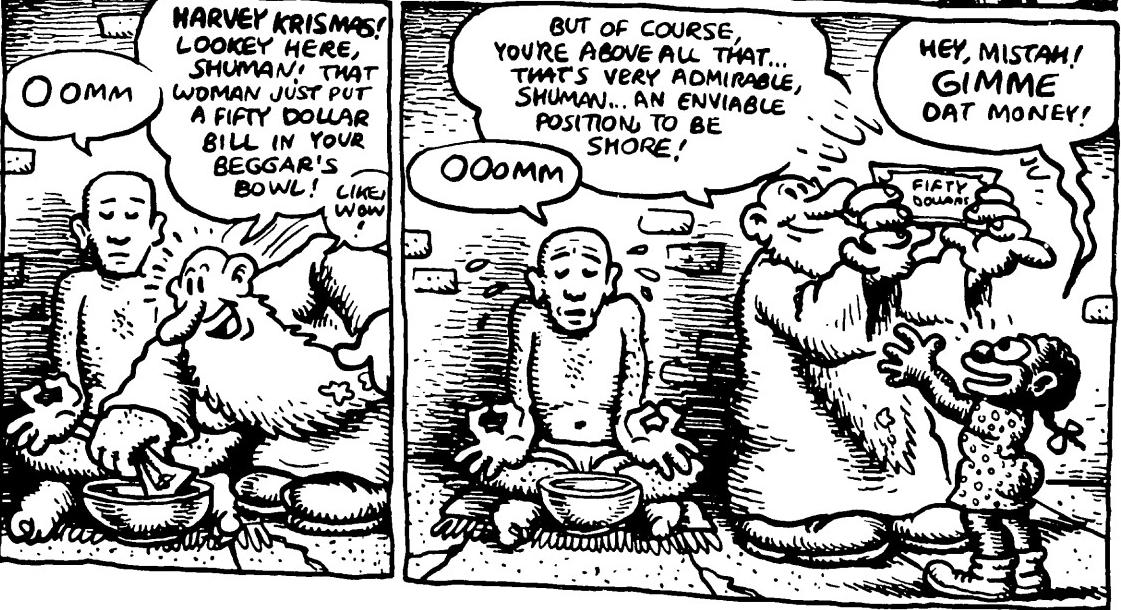
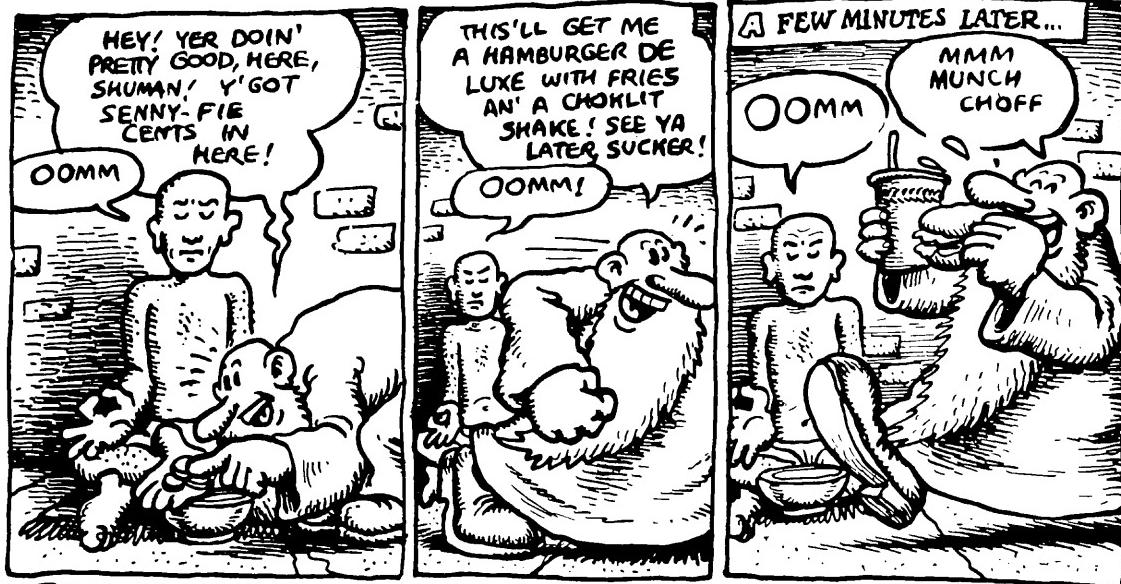


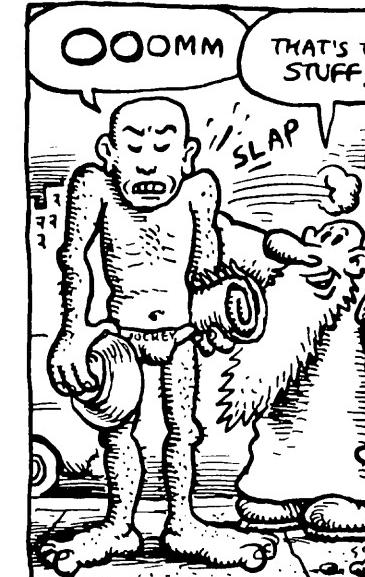
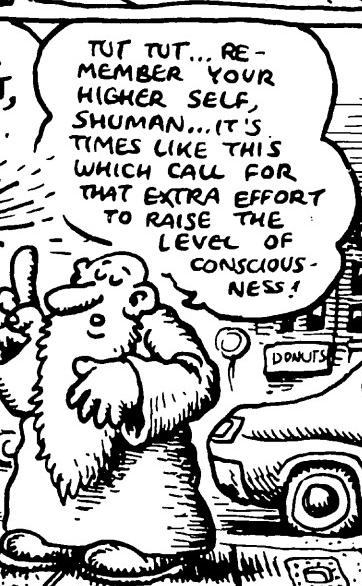
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**MR. NATURAL  
and  
SHUMAN  
the  
HUMAN  
in  
"OM SWEET OM"**

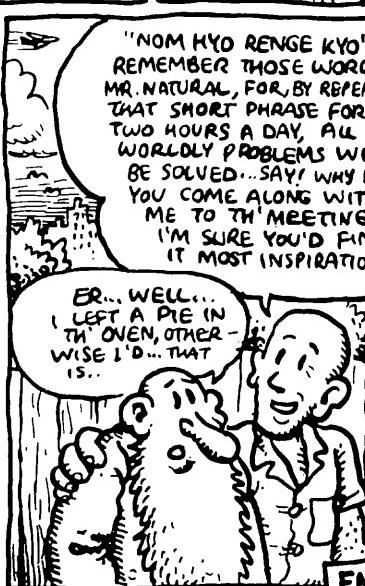


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HELLO OPERA-  
TOR! QUICK!  
SEND TH' MEN IN  
WHITE COATS  
DOWN HERE!  
HURRY! THERE'S  
A LUNATIC ON  
THE LOOSE!



"NOM KYO RENG KYO"...  
REMEMBER THOSE WORDS,  
MR. NATURAL, FOR, BY REPEATING  
THAT SHORT PHRASE FOR ONLY  
TWO HOURS A DAY, ALL YOUR  
WORLDLY PROBLEMS WILL  
BE SOLVED.. SAY! WHY DONT  
YOU COME ALONG WITH  
ME TO TH' MEETING!  
I'M SURE YOU'D FIND  
IT MOST INSPIRATIONAL!

END

# The Origins of MR. NATURAL



THIS TINY BATTERED PHOTOGRAPH MAY BE THE FIRST ONE EVER TAKEN OF MR. NATURAL, BUT THE EXPERTS HAVE DIFFERENT OPINIONS. BACK OF PHOTO IS INSCRIBED WITH THE NAME "FRED" BUT IS NOT MR. NATURAL'S HANDWRITING.



EARLIEST KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH THAT IS DEFINITELY THE VENERABLE ONE IS THIS PORTRAIT SIGNED "F. NATURAL, WESSINGTON SPRINGS, S.D., 1908." HANDWRITING EXPERTS HAVE VERIFIED THE SIGNATURE, AND AN OLD-TIMER STILL LIVING IN ALCESTER, SOUTH DAKOTA, RECALLS A MAN NAMED FRED NATURAL WHO JOBBED AROUND THAT AREA IN THOSE DAYS. HE REMEMBERS HIM AS A "NICE QUIET FELLOW."

MANY OF YOU Mr. Natural fans have asked that we run an article on the man's past life and early background. Certainly a life history on Mr. Natural is a fascinating idea, and so, with a certain amount of skepticism, we set about investigating. Our doubts were confirmed as we ran into one blind alley after another, and finally were forced to abandon trying to fill in several large gaps in his past. Whole decades, in fact, are entirely missing. A frustrating experience for the conscientious historian and Mr. Natural enthusiast.

His childhood is completely clouded in obscurity. His birthplace and birthdate are entirely unknown. No records have been found, and no relatives, and, of course, no one has been able to squeeze an ounce of information out of the Old Man Himself (except, according to him, that his father is still alive and well, but he won't tell us where). All knowledge of his life has been gathered without his help or support, and the whole

project leaves him "Cold," as he puts it.

The 1908 photograph is the earliest proof we have of his existence. The photo was sent to us by Mrs. Ada Cooper, a Mr. Natural fan, who found the old picture in a trunk full of her mother's belongings. Mrs. Cooper says she can never remember her mother, now deceased, ever mentioning that she knew Mr. Natural.

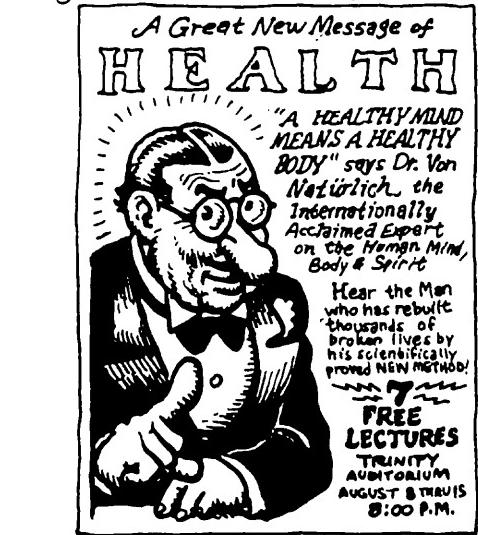
As for his age at the time the photograph was taken, he appears to have been between thirty-five and forty, which would make him close to one-hundred years old today!

Not a clue exists as to his whereabouts between 1908 and 1921, the year our wild young wiseman moved to Chicago, where he stayed up to 1929. Here we lose track of the elusive sage for another seven years. But we managed to hunt down several people who knew him in 'that toddlin' town' in the twenties, and so have gathered a fairly complete picture of Mr. Natural's adventures through that lurid decade.

In the fall of 1921 Mr. Natural got a job in a drugstore as an errand runner on the near north side. (Some believe the drugstore was a front for a speak-easy and that it was Natch's job to deliver

the illegal booze to thirsty customers, but this is mere here-say). It may have been while in the employ of this pharmacy that he became interested in the drug field, for two years later, in 1923, he was promoting a "Wonder Drug" that he claimed could cure all "mental and spiritual ills" and had a small but enthusiastic cult of followers, mostly women, who endorsed this claim vigorously. Going under the name of "Dr. Von Naturlich," he travelled through the midwest for a short time, selling the "wonder elixir" and "healing" the sick, until he was arrested in Peoria, Illinois, convicted of Fraud and spent six months in the county jail. There are still those who applaud Dr. Von Naturlich's Wonder Drug, and curse the day his entire stock was confiscated by the police. Mrs. Vicki Hodgetts, now of Los Angeles, said to me when I talked with her: "Well, yes! It certainly was a wonder drug! I know it was, because I was absolutely neurotic! I was miserable, believe me! Then along comes this Dr. Von Naturlich... and... well, I've been a very happy person ever since!"

The police file on the case, which was still in the Peoria Courthouse, states, "Although purported to possess potent powers over the mind and spirit, a close scrutiny of this so-called 'Wonder Drug' under a microscope has proven without a shadow of a doubt that it is nothing more than plain ordinary tap-water."



This band was known as "Mr. Natural and his Seven Lyrical Lechers" at first and later the group was enlarged to thirteen members under the name of "Mr. Natural's Lyrical Lechers and their Orchestra". They were a popular group around Chicago for almost two years, playing in roadhouses and Cafes, and an occasional College Prom or Hotel Ballroom. Mr. Natural himself wrote many of the songs in their repertoire and even played on a assortment of unlikely instruments. Their arrangements had a strangely unique sound as evidenced by a few surviving records.



TWO RECORDS CUT BY MR. NATURAL'S BAND IN THE SUMMER OF 1928



It was an era of easy money and within a year, Mr. Natural had accumulated a small fortune. In 1928 he was living in a large plush home in a Chicago suburb, owned two Packard limousines, employed the services of a maid, butler and chauffeur and threw huge wild parties.

Then, suddenly, and unexpectedly, he gave it all away to some bum he'd picked up on the street, typical of the restless, unfathomable nature of his perfect being. His friends were totally baffled by this sudden change, and when he moved to a cheap skid-row hotel, he gradually lost contact with his former well-to-do whoopee-making friends.

Harry Barnes, the drummer in the band, says "We had some good times back then. I'll never understand why Natchy threw it all away. Everybody thought he was nuts! Of course, two years later, the rest of us went down the tubes along with him!"

"It looked to me liked he just flipped his noodle!" —Joey Norton, banjo player in the group. "I still can't figure it! I used to think he was a smart operator til he pulled that stunt! And he even had it put in writing! Crackers!" — Doris Hall, wife of Cafe owner Monte Hall.

From the winter of '28-'29, when Mr. Natural moved to skid-row, until a full seven years later, nothing is known of him.



THIS PHOTOGRAPH, MADE IN DEC., 1933, CONTAINS A PERSON WHO MIGHT BE MR. NATURAL, ACCORDING TO THE SANN MATED CHAPTER OF THE MR. NATURAL SOCIETY, WHO FOUND THE PICTURE. "WHO ELSE COULD IT BE?" SAYS THE GROUP'S PRESIDENT. INDEED, THERE IS A STRONG RESEMBLANCE IN THE FEATURES OF THE DOWN-AND-OUT CHAP ABOVE TO THOSE OF THE LIVING SAINT. PHOTO WAS TAKEN IN CHICAGO, BUT NO ONE HAS TURNED UP WHO KNEW HIM THERE AFTER 1929.

In 1936 he popped up again on the west coast, where he met another great American folk hero and all-around geek, the Old Pooperoo. The Old Poop was working as a fruit picker in Central California in the late thirties, and he and Mr. Natural crossed paths in a working-man's bar in Modesto one night in October 1936. They became close friends and traveled together, picking up a few dollars now and then working in the fields or on construction jobs, getting drunk and whoring and hopping freight cars all over the United States.

"Natural was a good ol' boy, yep... we went through plenty of troubles together, you bet! Why, we musta been in every calaboose in this land of Liberty, from Maine to California and back again! We fought about women and cried on each other's shoulder over lost romances... we talked about old times back home for hours, an' when we had a few bucks we lived like royal Turks! But they was generally tough times, so I got in with some sharpies in Philly and for awhile there I was rakin' it in. This was around '39 or '40. I didn't see Natural much after that. I guess I got too booshwah for him. He wuz uneasy around my business associates. I s'pose we did put on some airs.. haw haw... strictly high-hat! So he got bored and headed back west an' I didn't see him again, liked I said. But I started hearing stories about him gettin' in with small-time crooks an' dope fiends, so I sent him some cash to come east an' get in the business with me, but of course he just spent the money and

THE OLD POOPEROO AND MR. NATURAL IN CHEYENNE, WYOMING, 1938



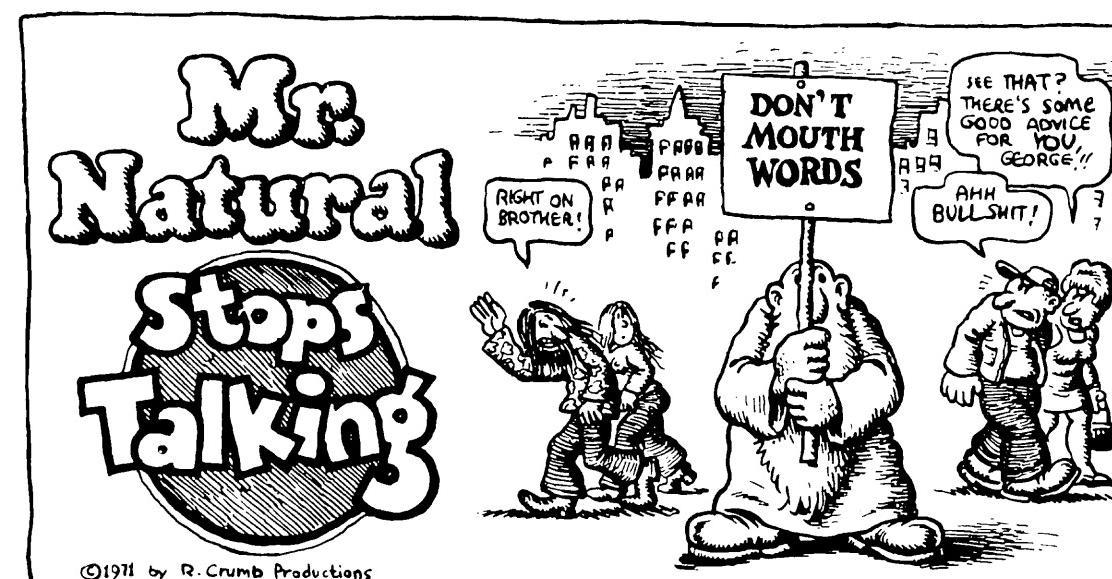
MR. NATURAL WITH A GROUP OF EARLY DISCIPLES IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, MARCH 1962

wrote askin' me for more and more 'til I got fed up and wouldn't send him any. I figured he was Hell-bent on a dead-end course. Last I heard he wuz runnin' around with a tough twerp from Tulsa name of Judy Holiday... not th' same one as th' movie star, but a nice lookin' dish from what I heard." No one seems to know what became of this Tulsa sweetheart.

When the War broke out Mr. Natural once again vanished from the scene. He has talked vaguely of this period of his life, but will not give us any specific details (He claims he can't remember). By his own admission, if we can trust him, he was in the Middle and Far East through the war years and after. He says he was in India, traveled to China, the Himalayas, Tibet and Afghanistan, where he got work as a taxi driver, and, in his own words "learned many strange and wonderful things" in those distant lands.

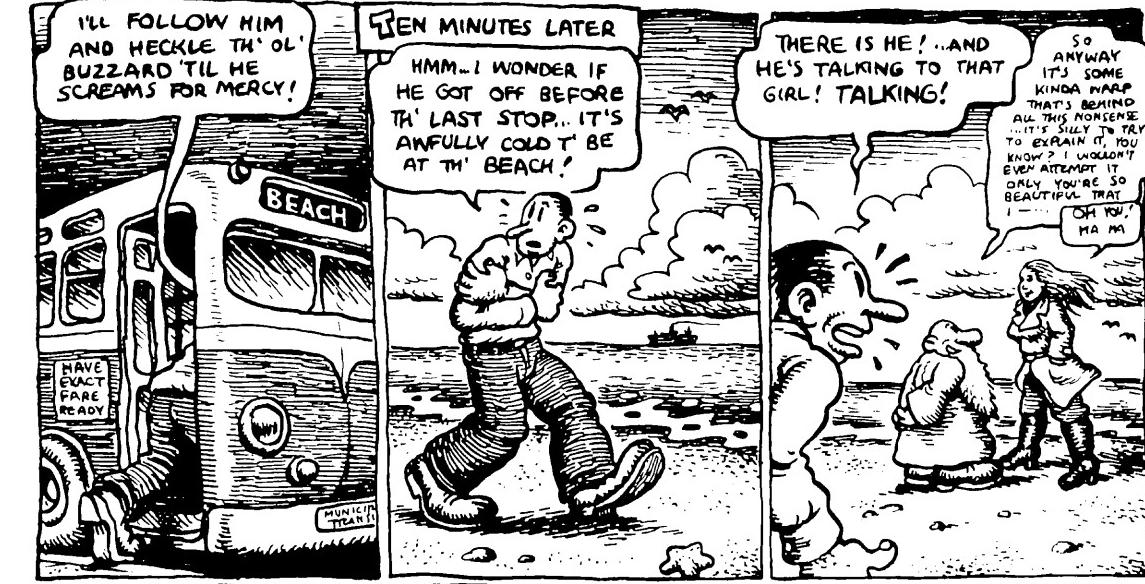
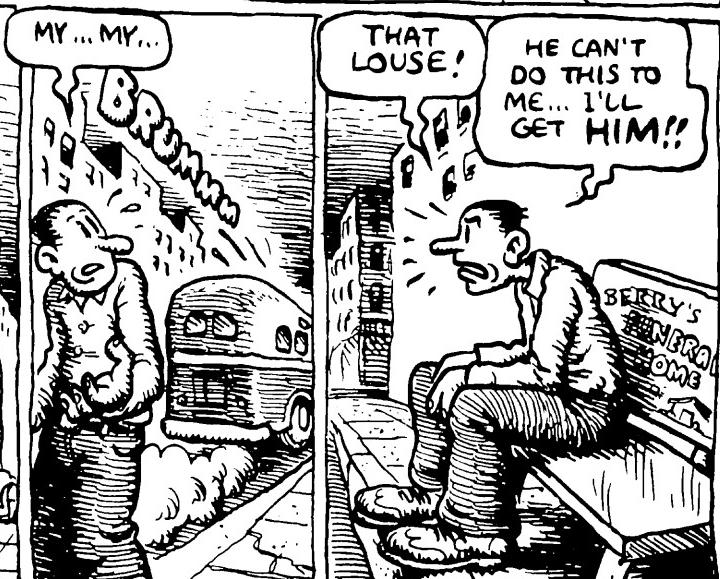
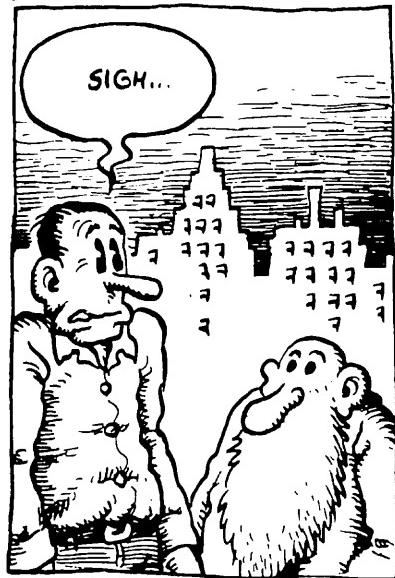
He returned to America in 1953 "for some stupid reason" and loafed around for a year "getting very depressed about the world situation," he tells us, and so, renouncing all worldly pursuits and pleasures, he retreated to Death Valley in 1955 to "start anew."

In June, 1960, a small group of ardent devotees formed the first chapter of the Mr. Natural Fan Clubs of America in Southern California. They kept close ties with his spiritual development in the desert, as well as looking after his financial matters. In 1965 he began making speaking tours, visiting Colleges and Universities, and by 1966 he was already coming into his own as a recognized powerful spiritual force on this planet, a great religious leader, and a living model of Godlike perfection for all of Humanity to emulate. His moving words of wisdom have been translated into German, French, Spanish, Italian, Norwegian, Dutch and Japanese, and his presence on this globe has changed it for the better, as we all know!!



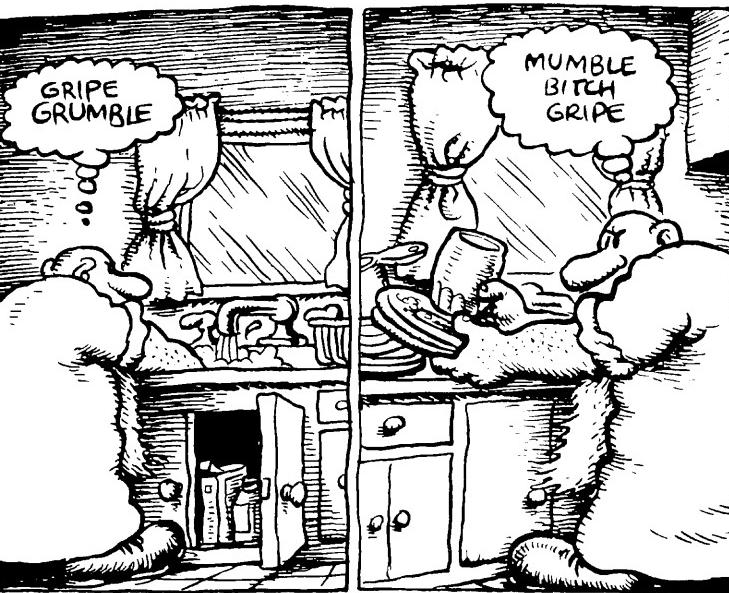
©1971 by R. Crumb Productions





# Mr. Natural

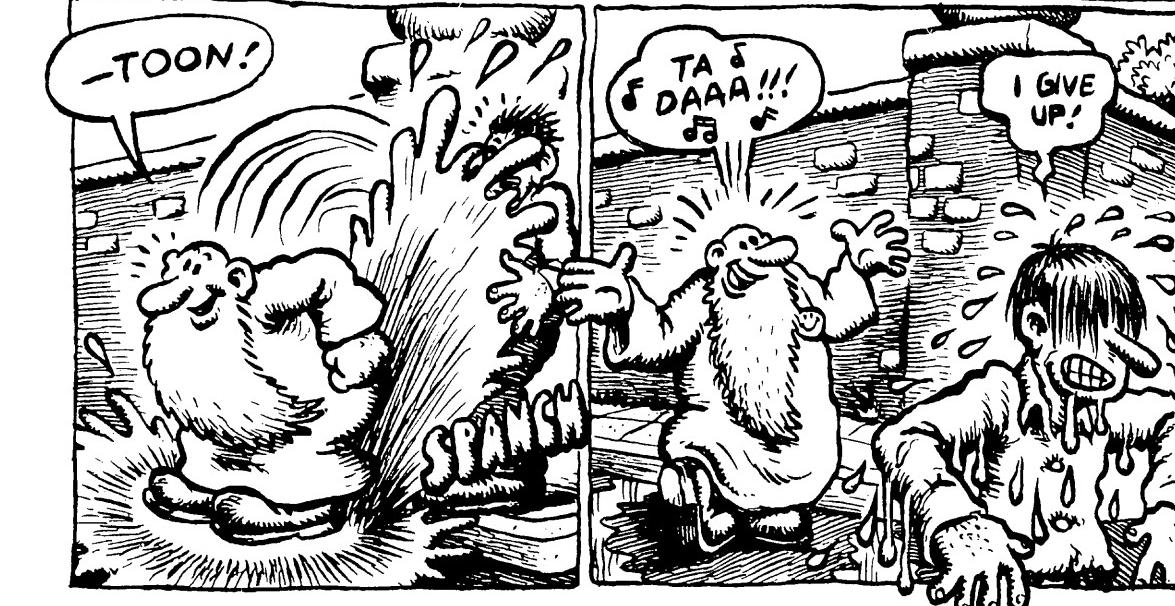
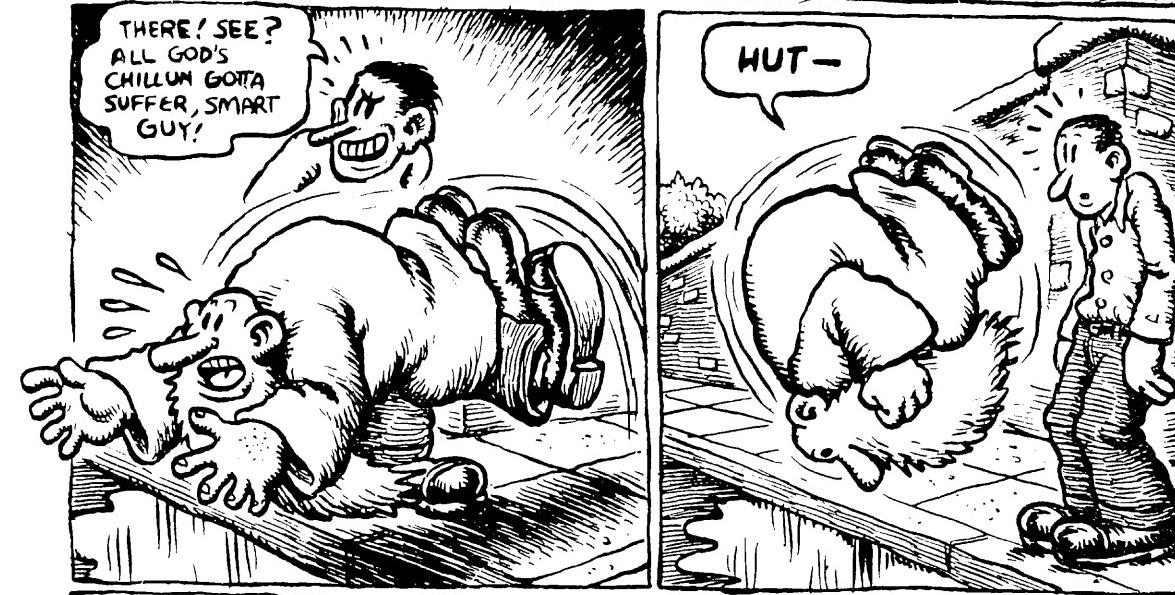
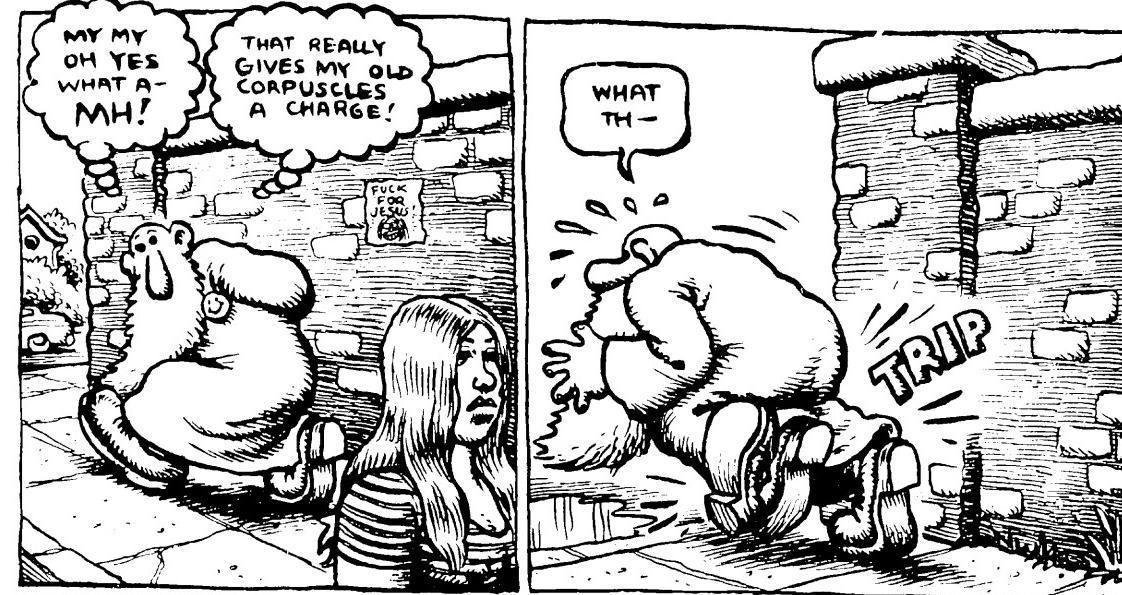
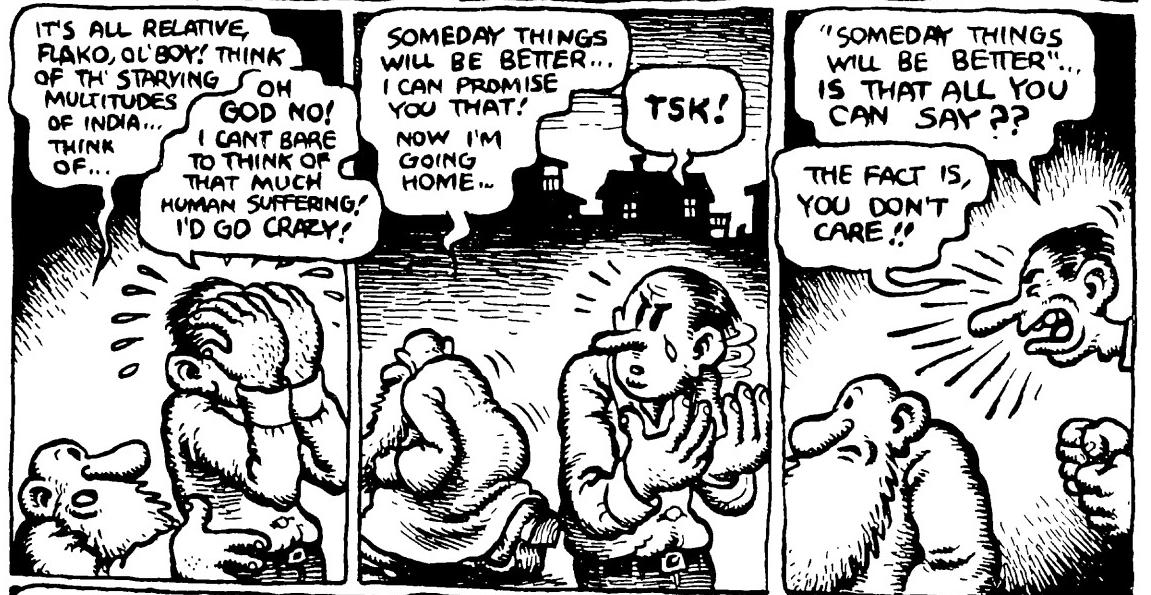
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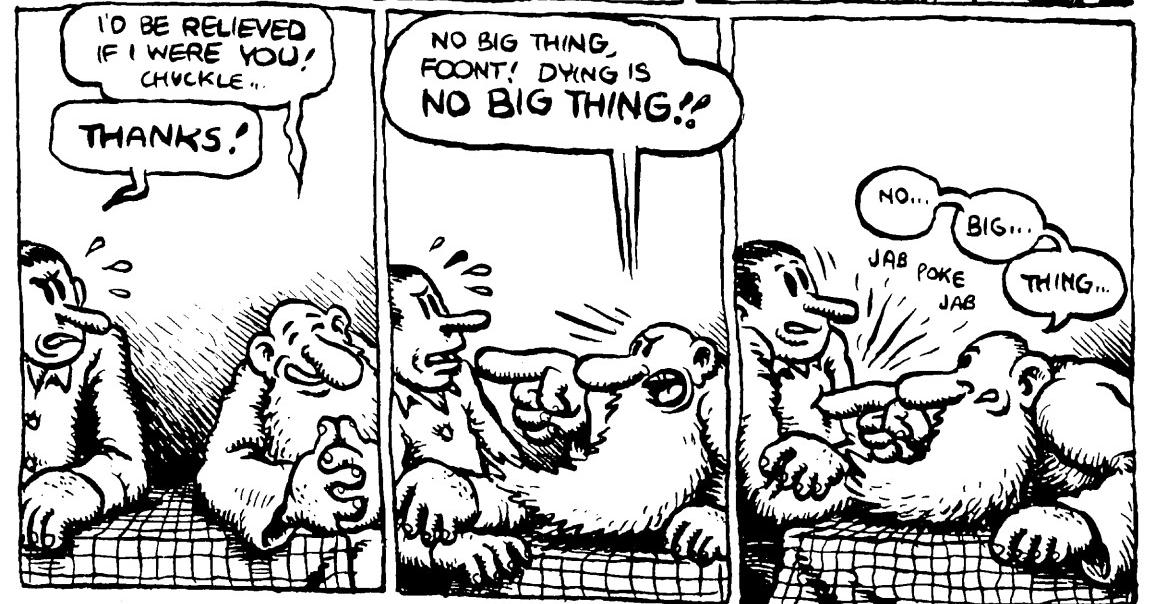
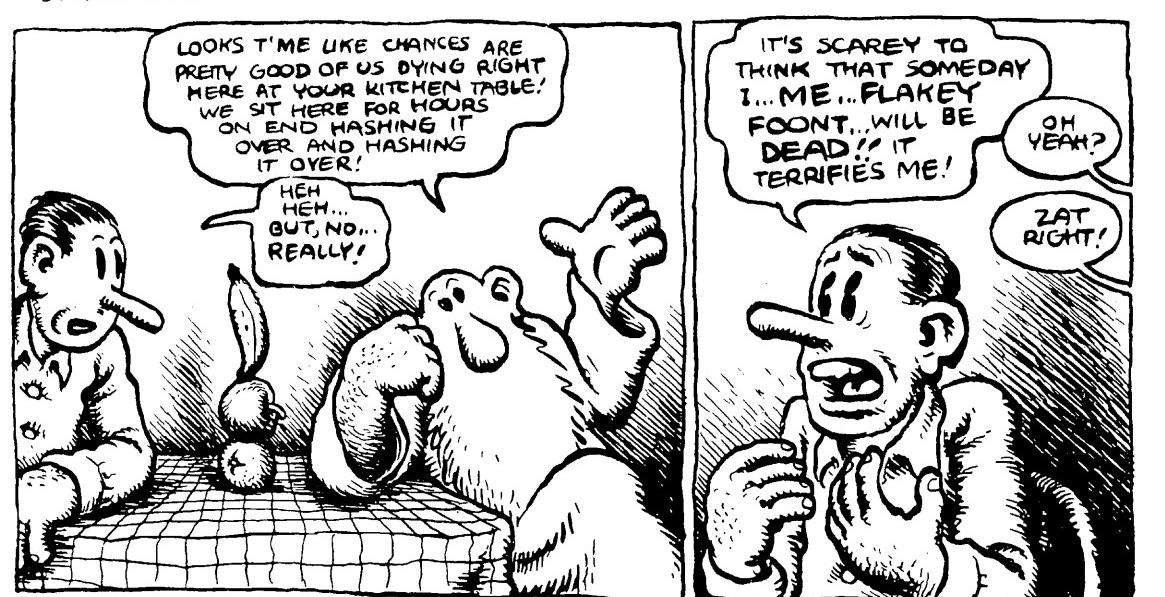
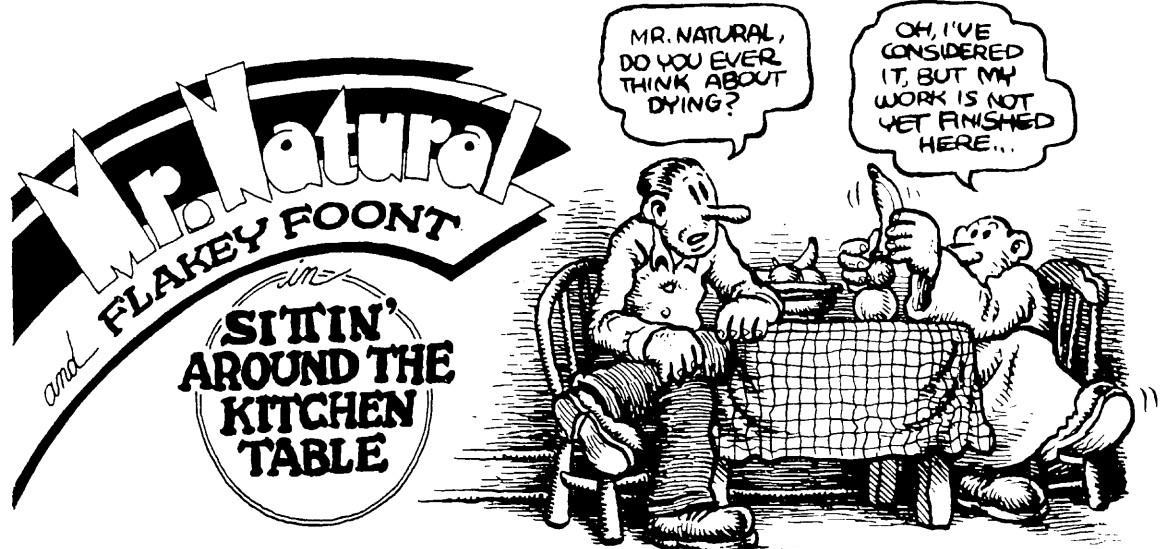


# MR NATURAL and FLAKEY FOON in A GURL IN HOTPANTS

by R. CRUMB



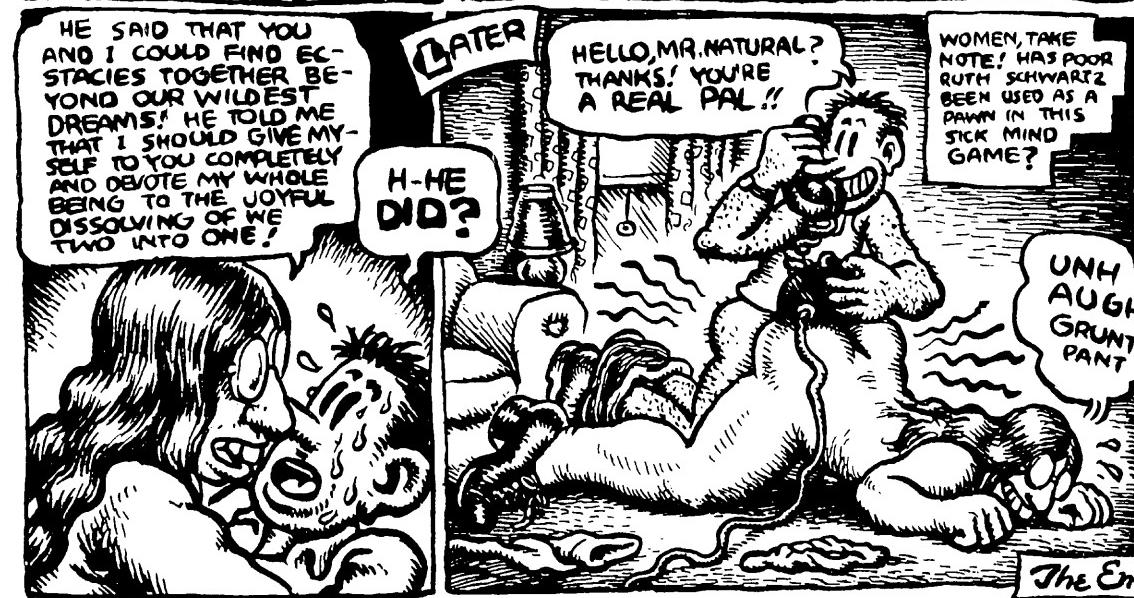
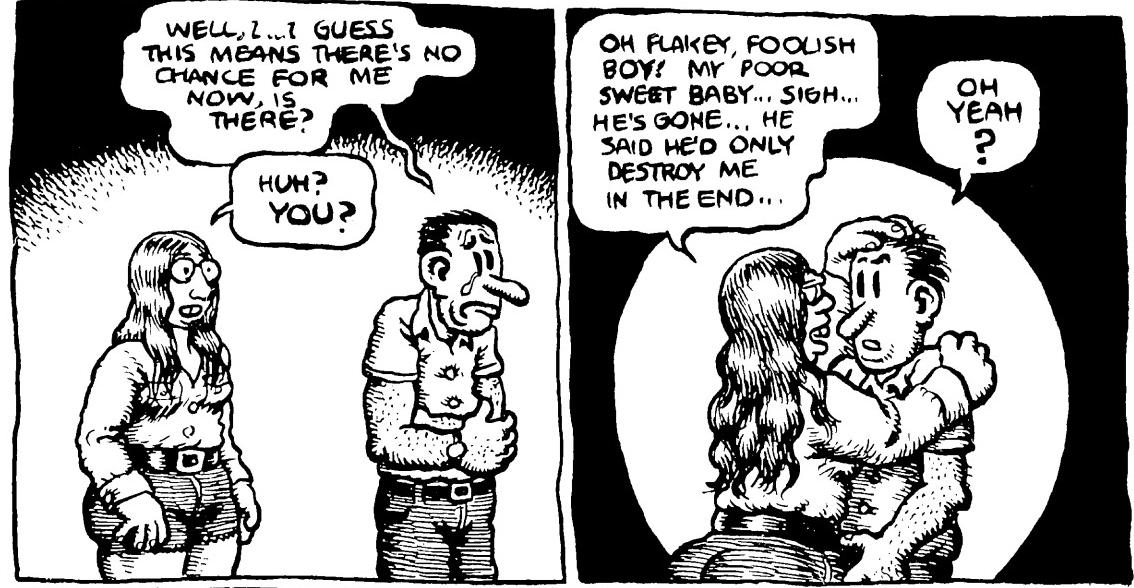
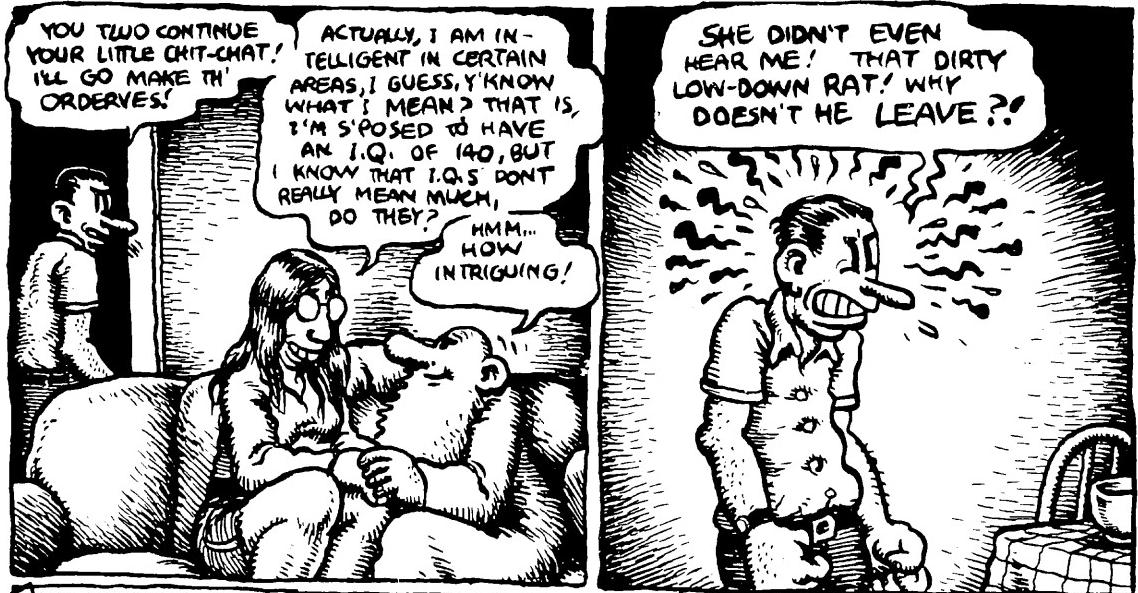


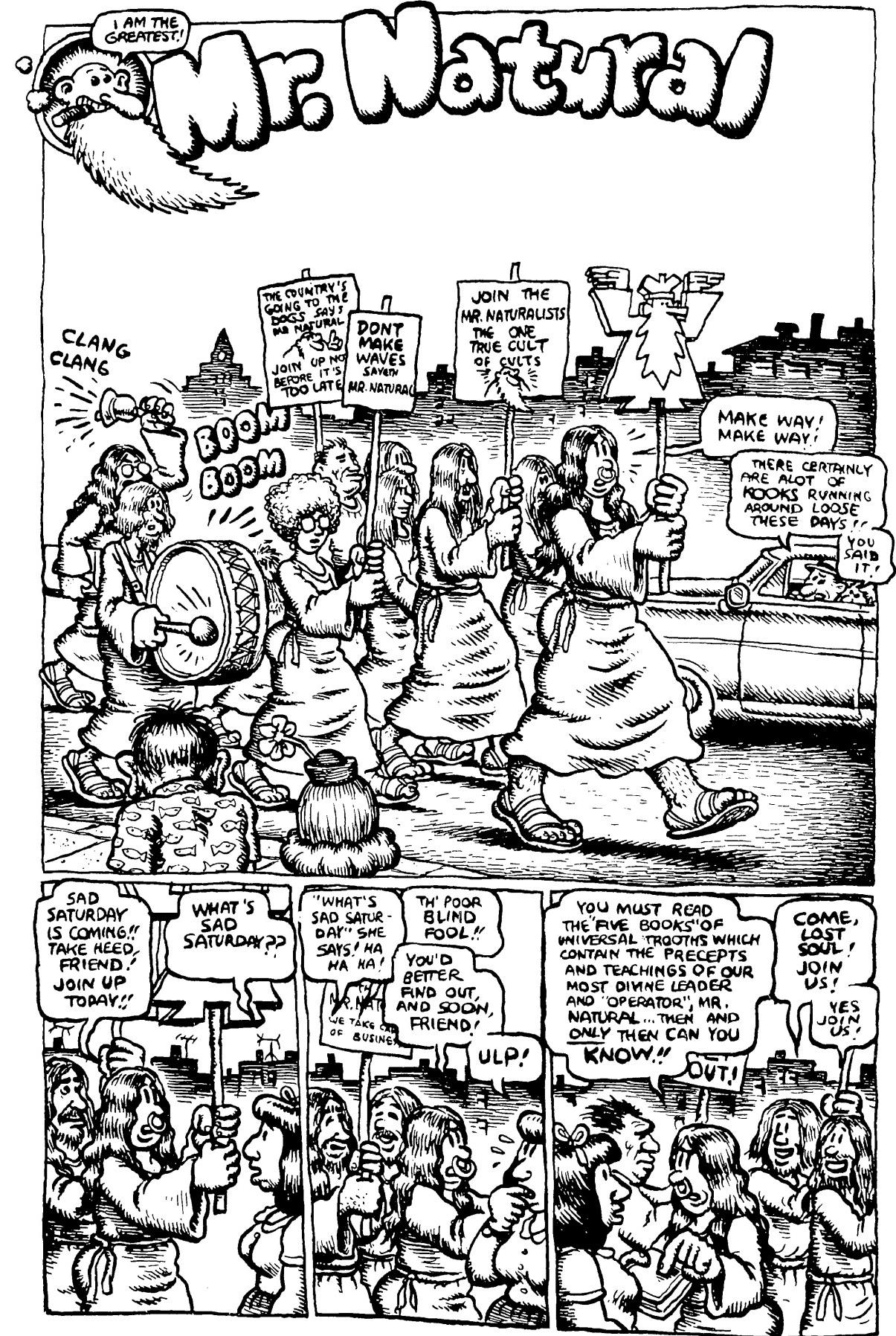


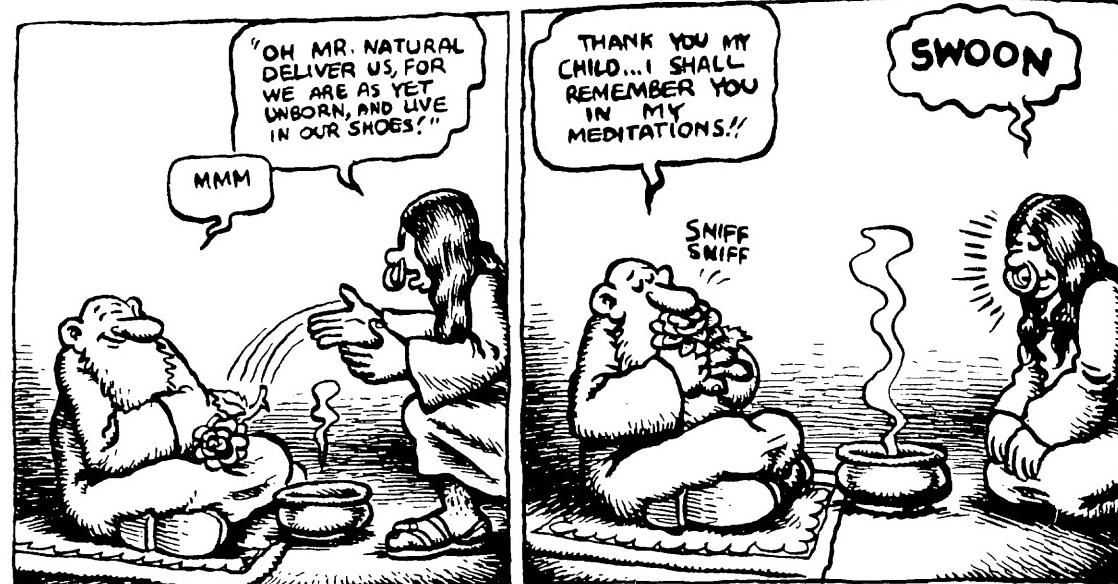
# Mr. Natural

in "THE GIRLFRIEND"

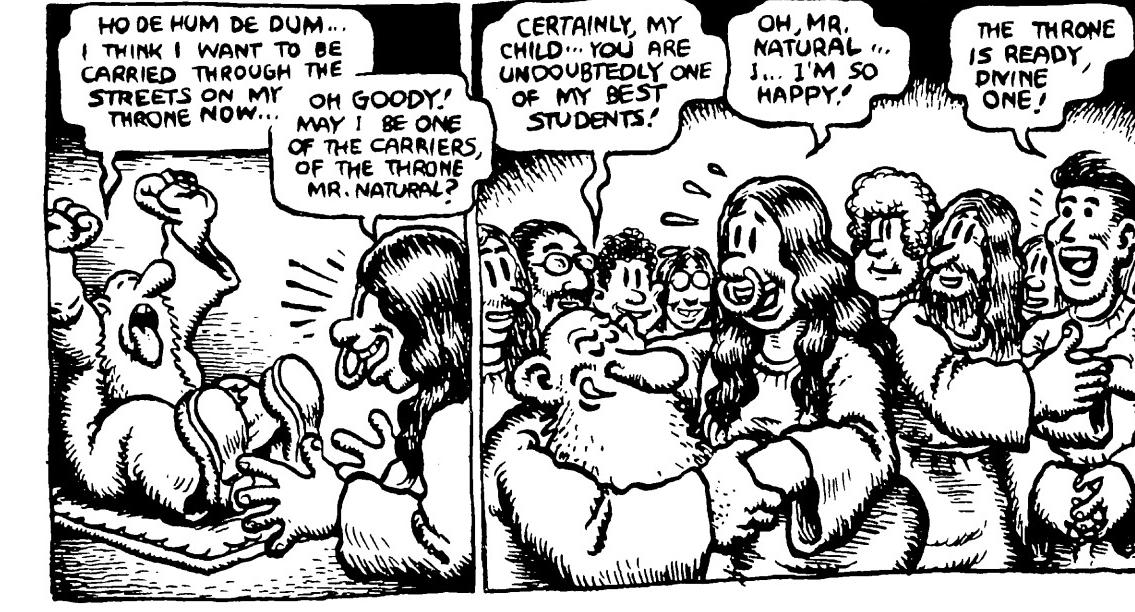
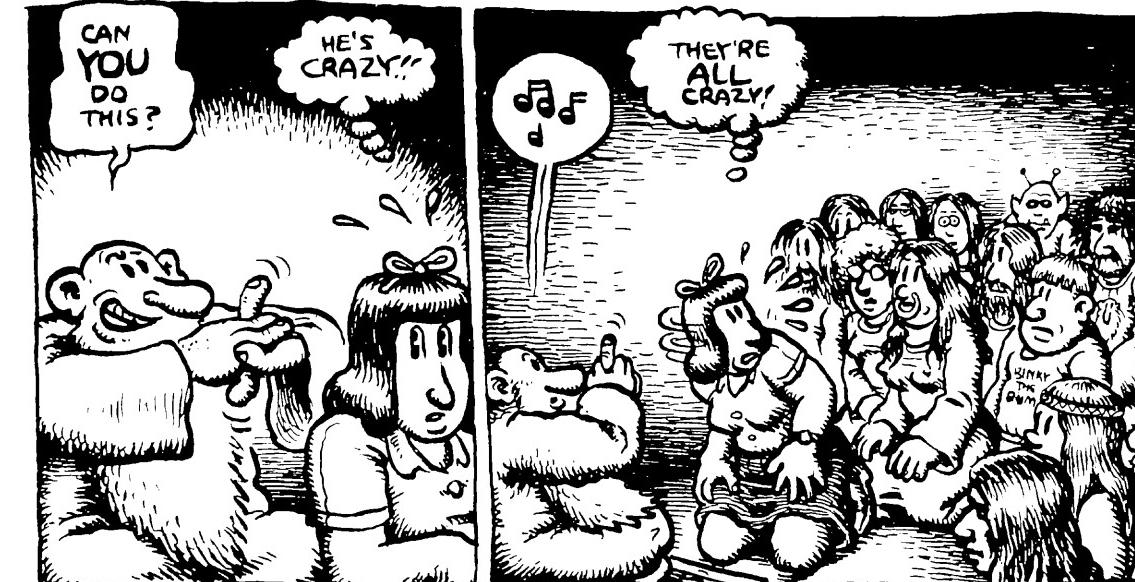
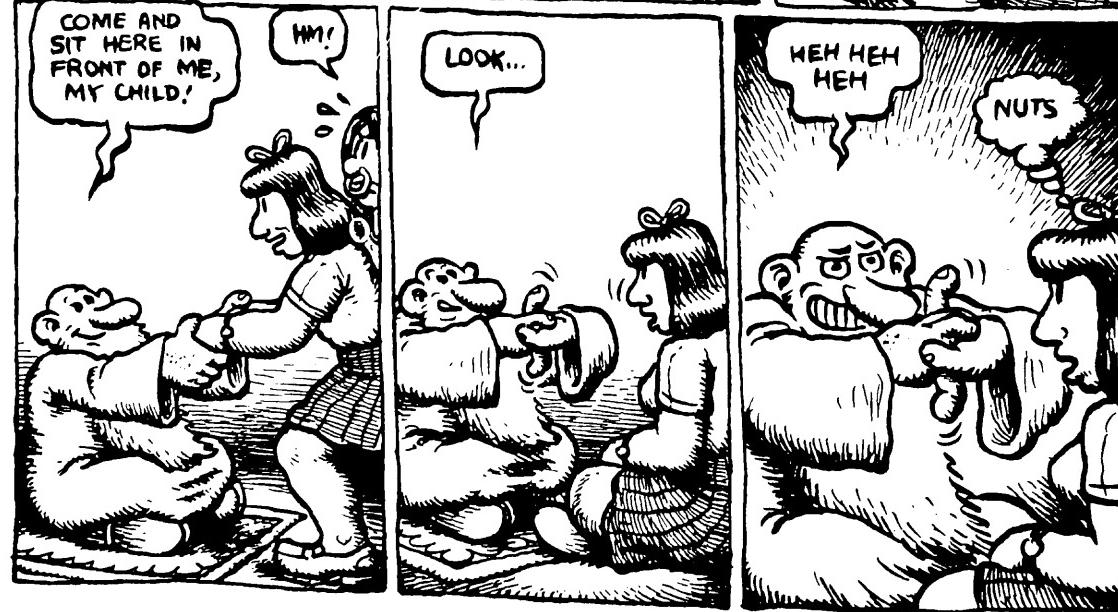


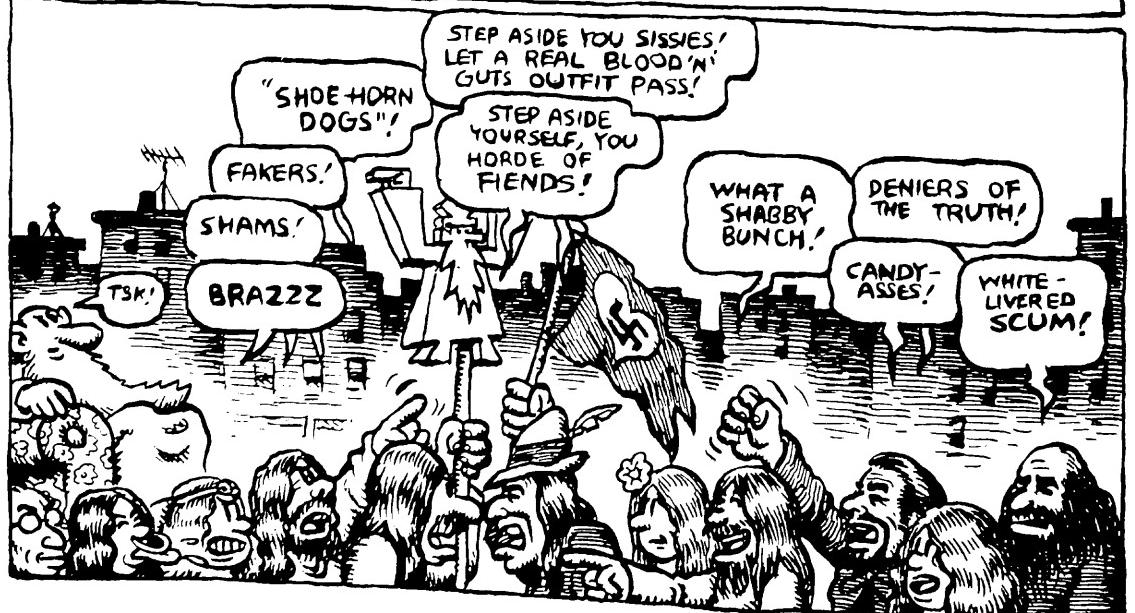






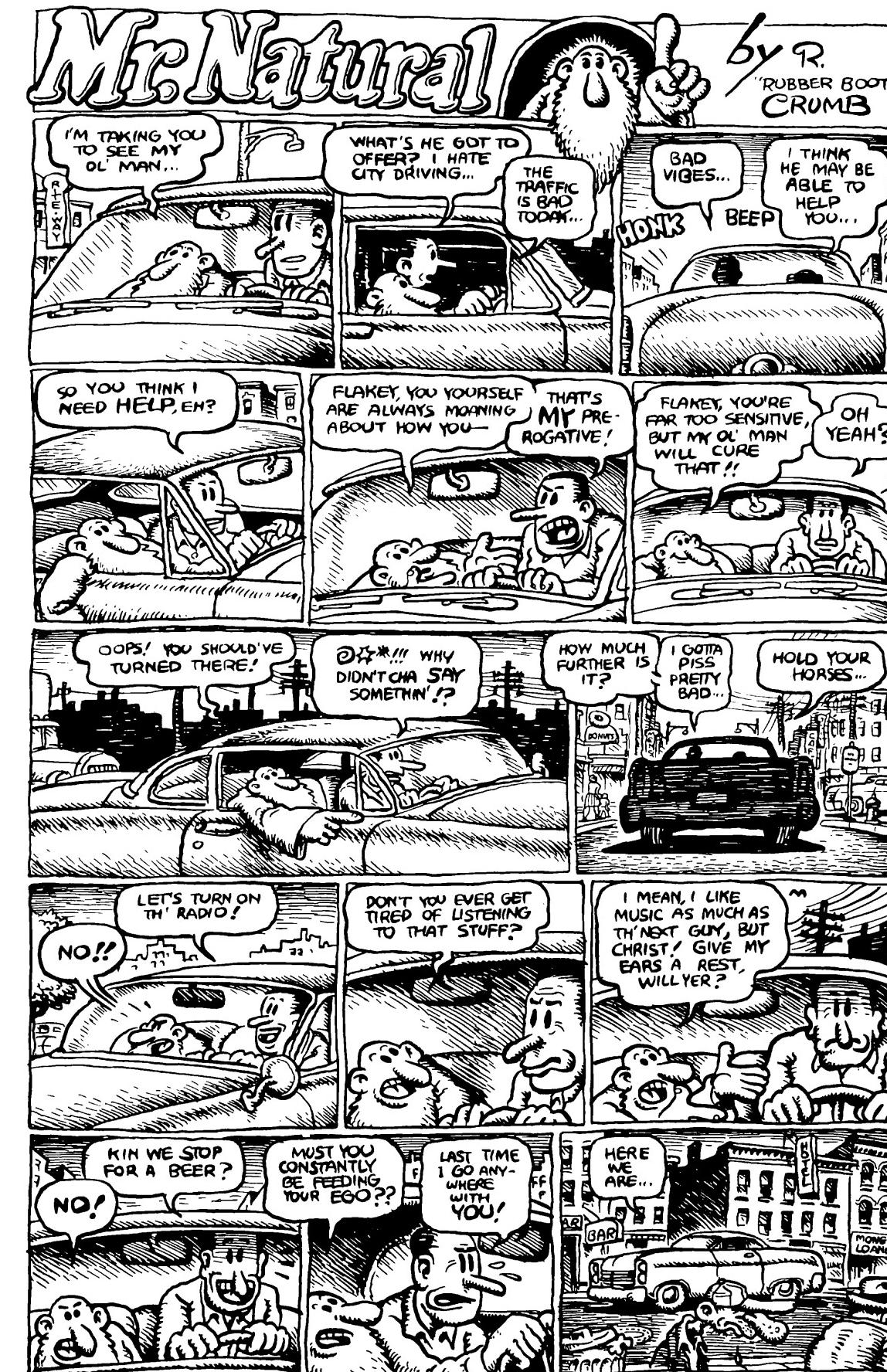
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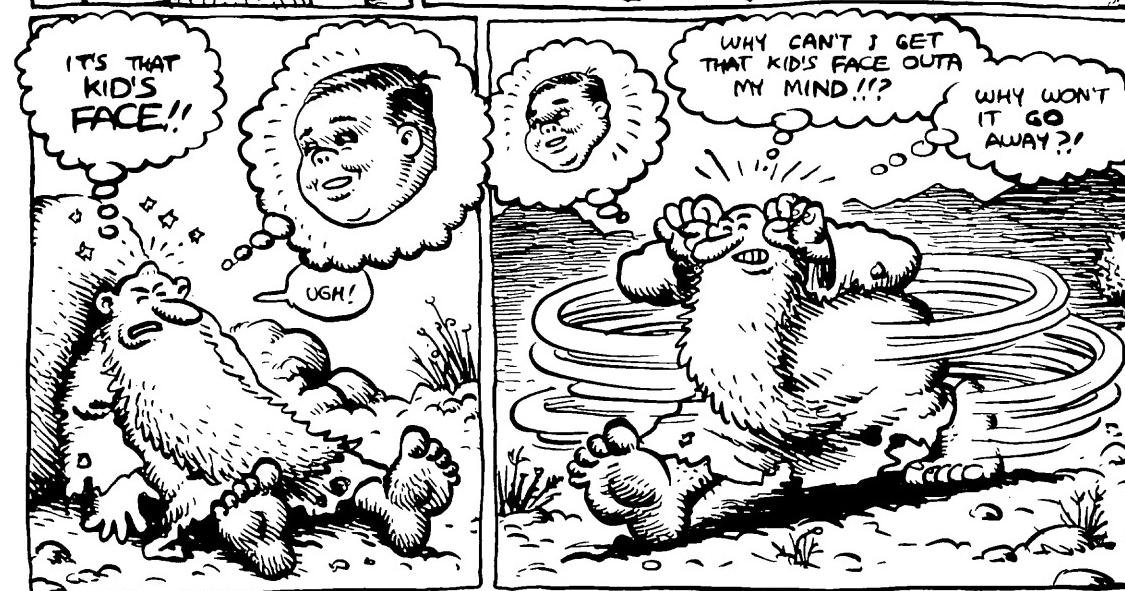
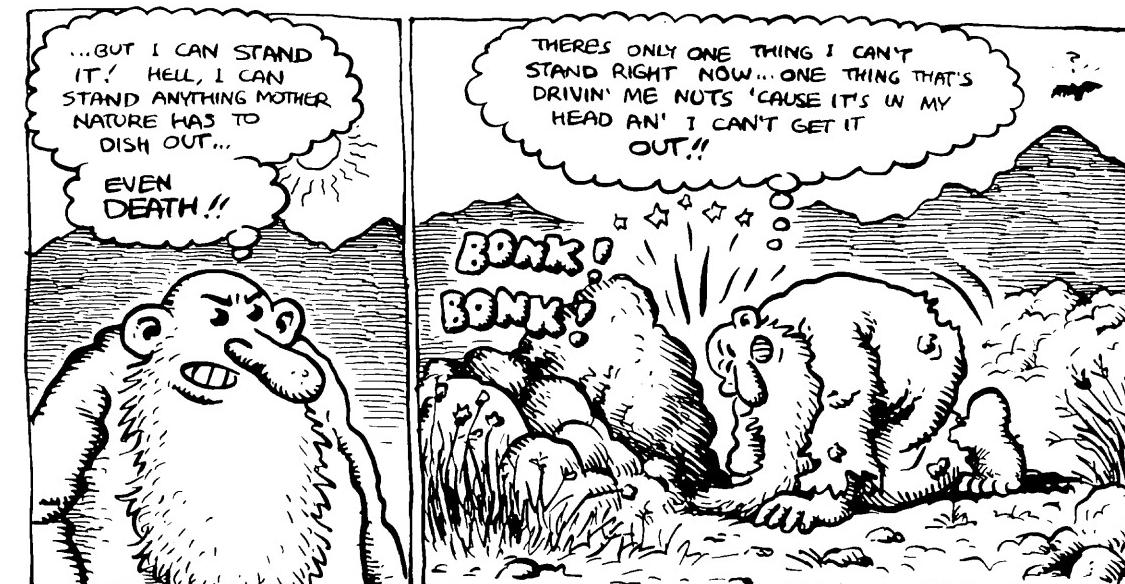
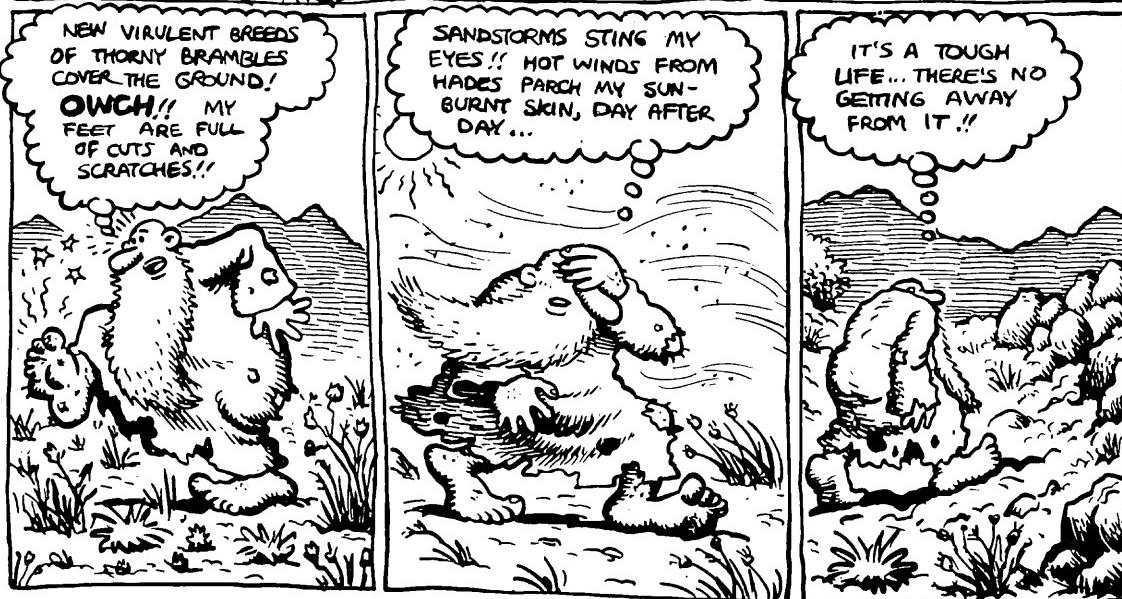
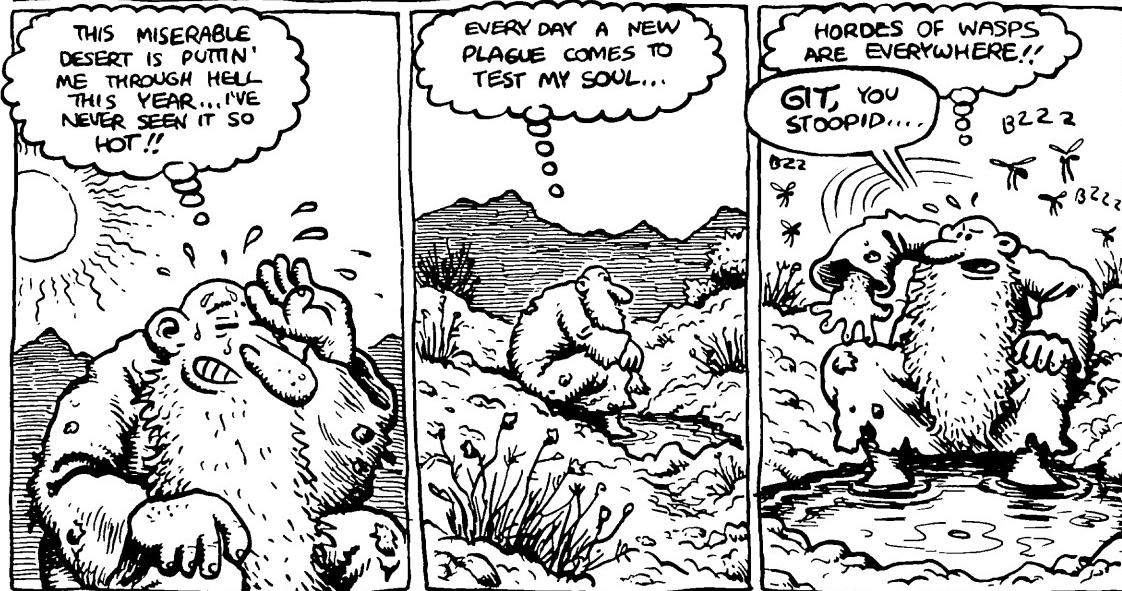


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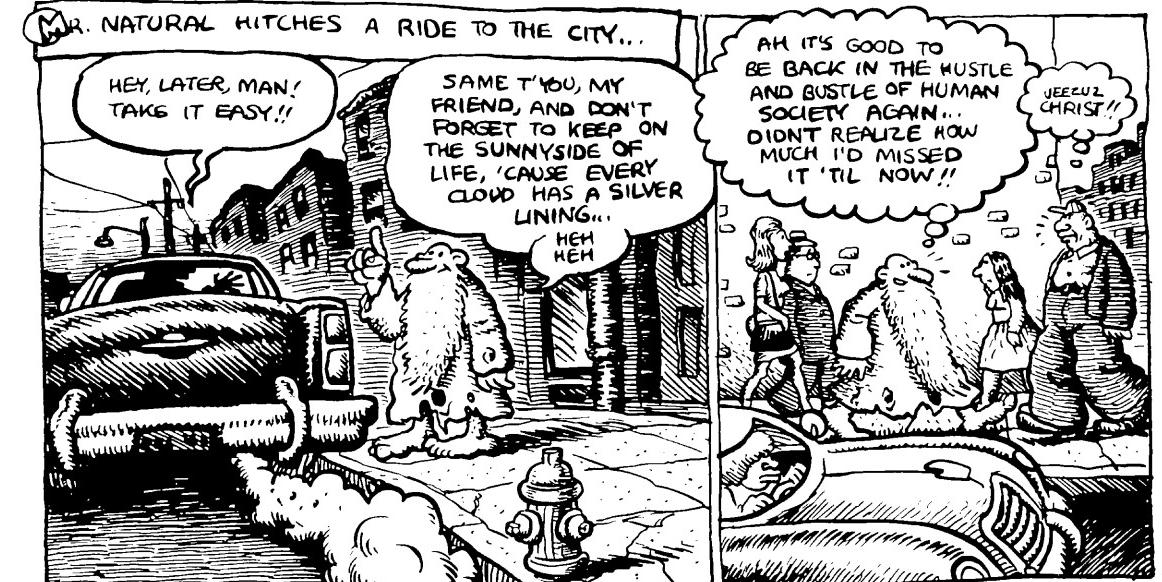
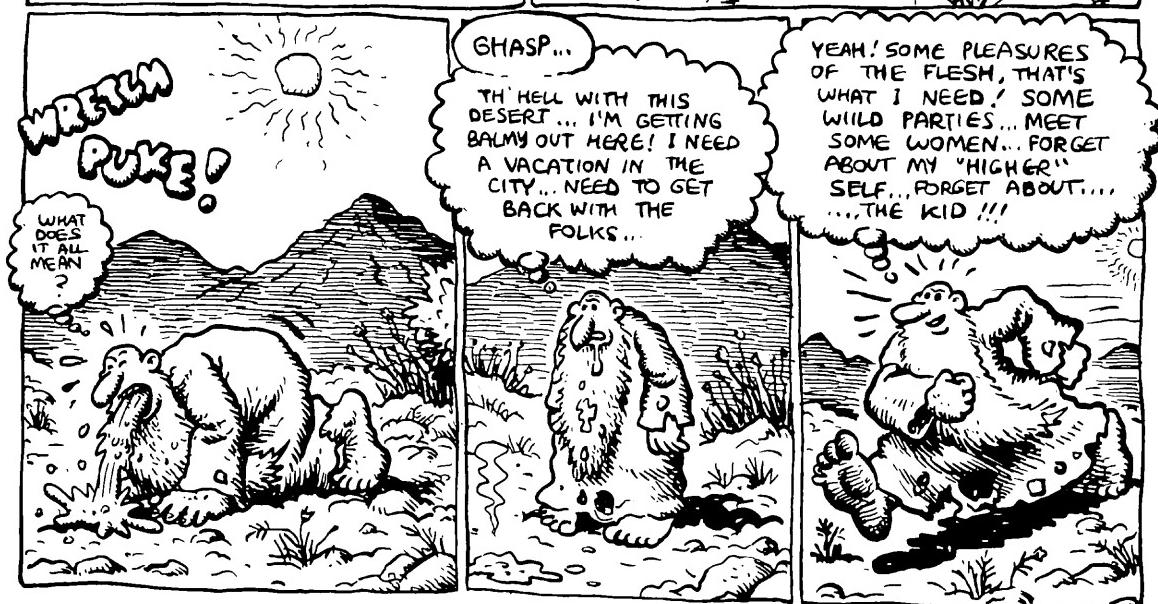
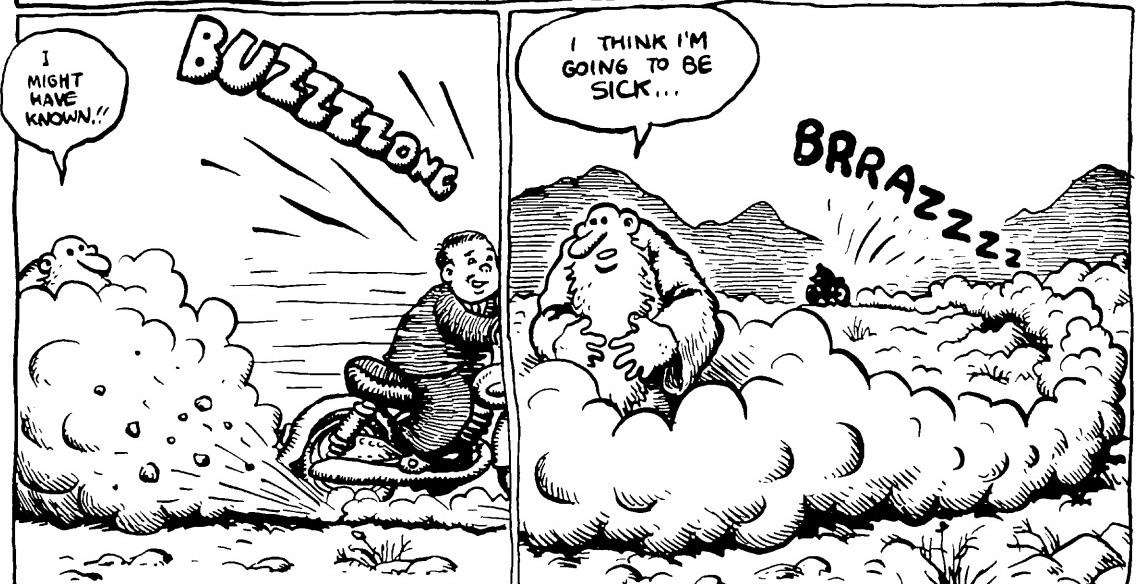
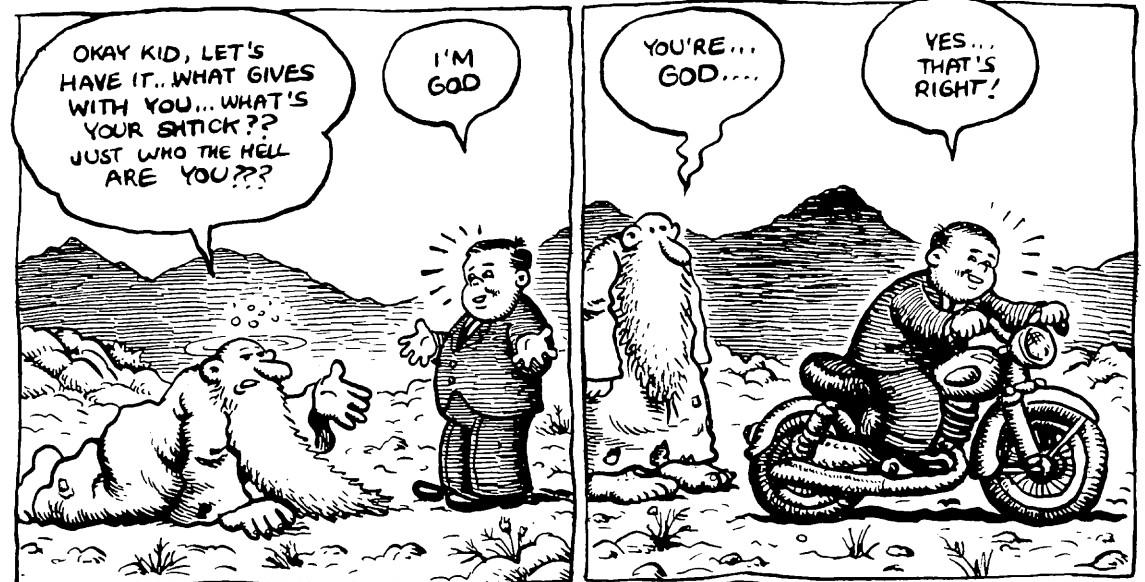


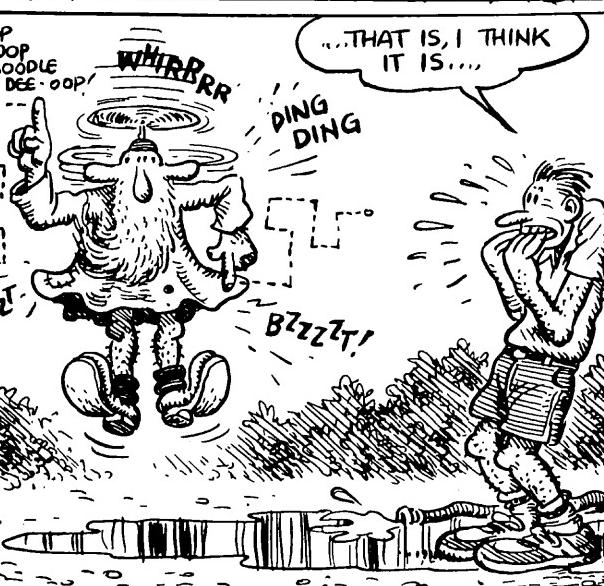
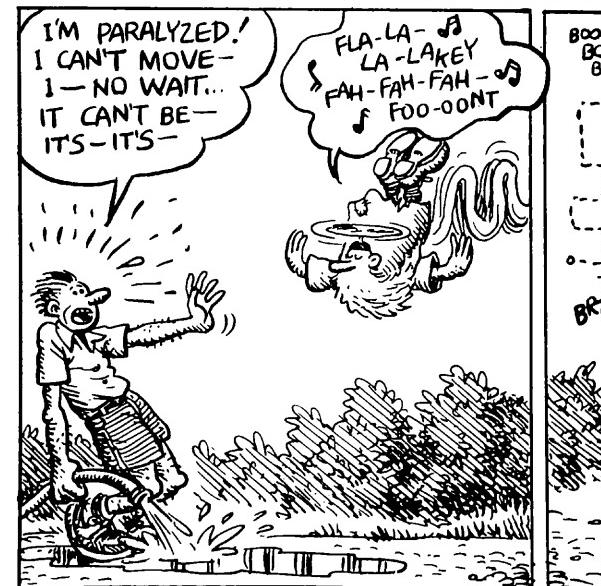
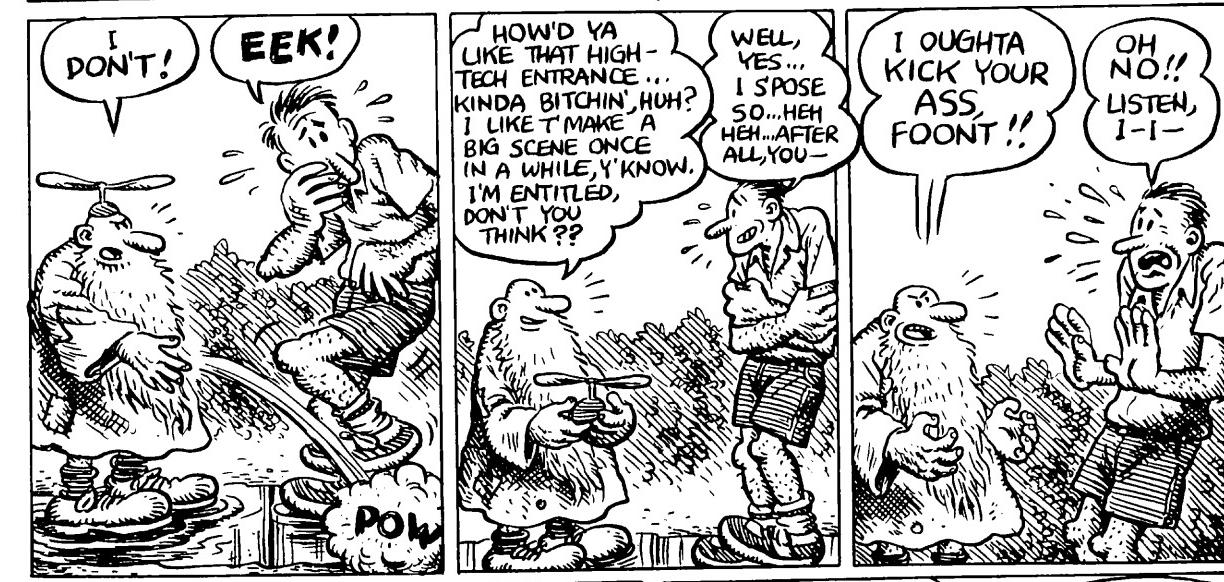
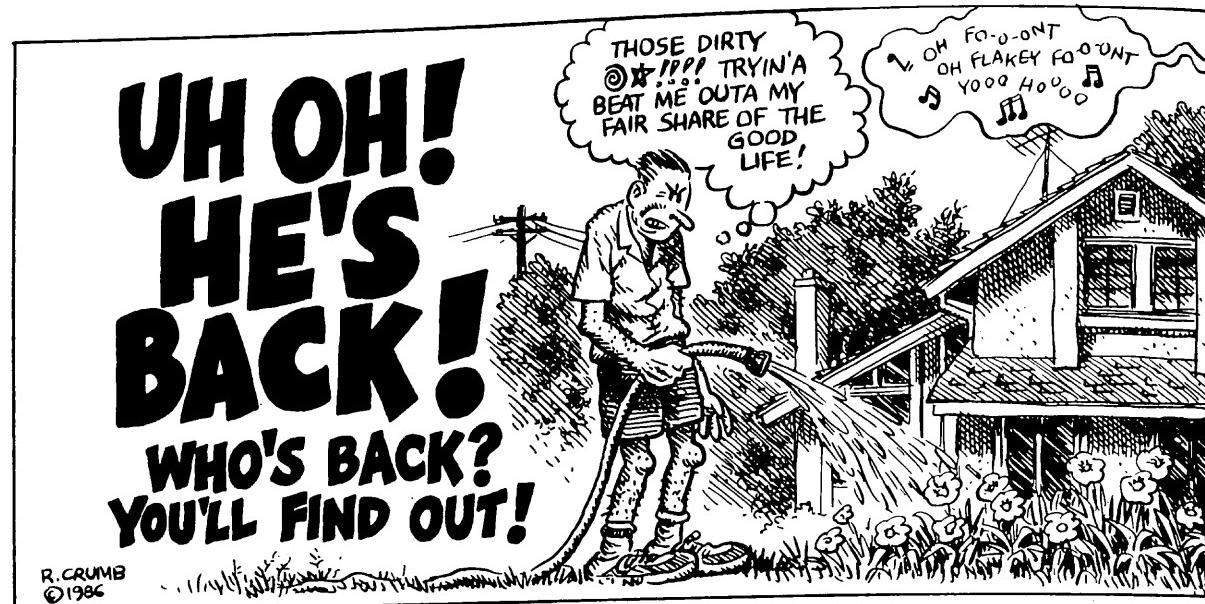
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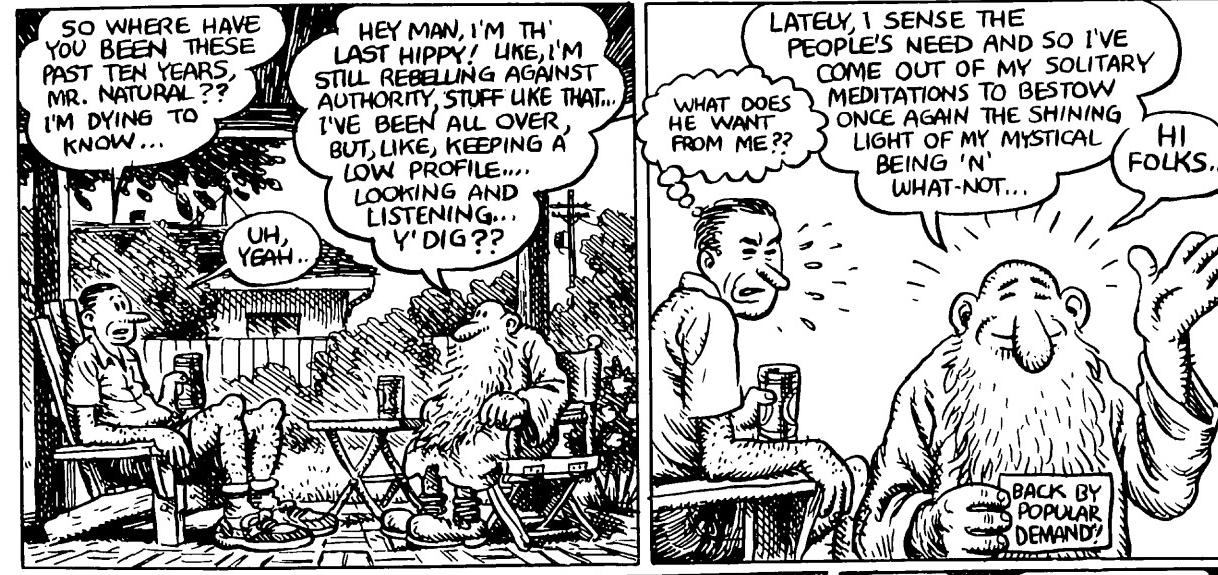
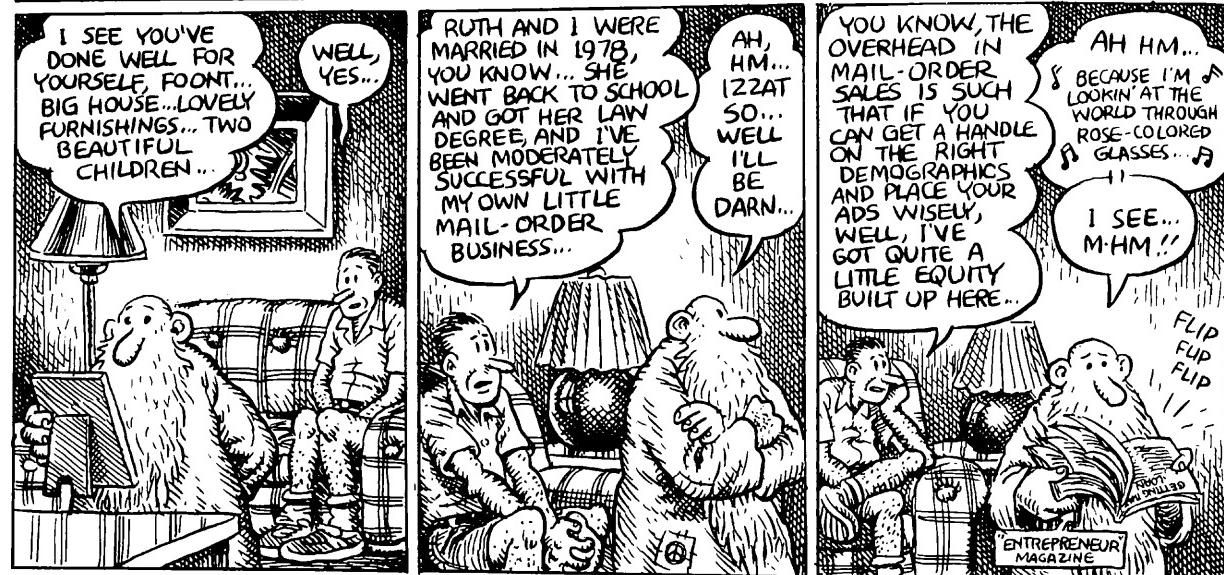
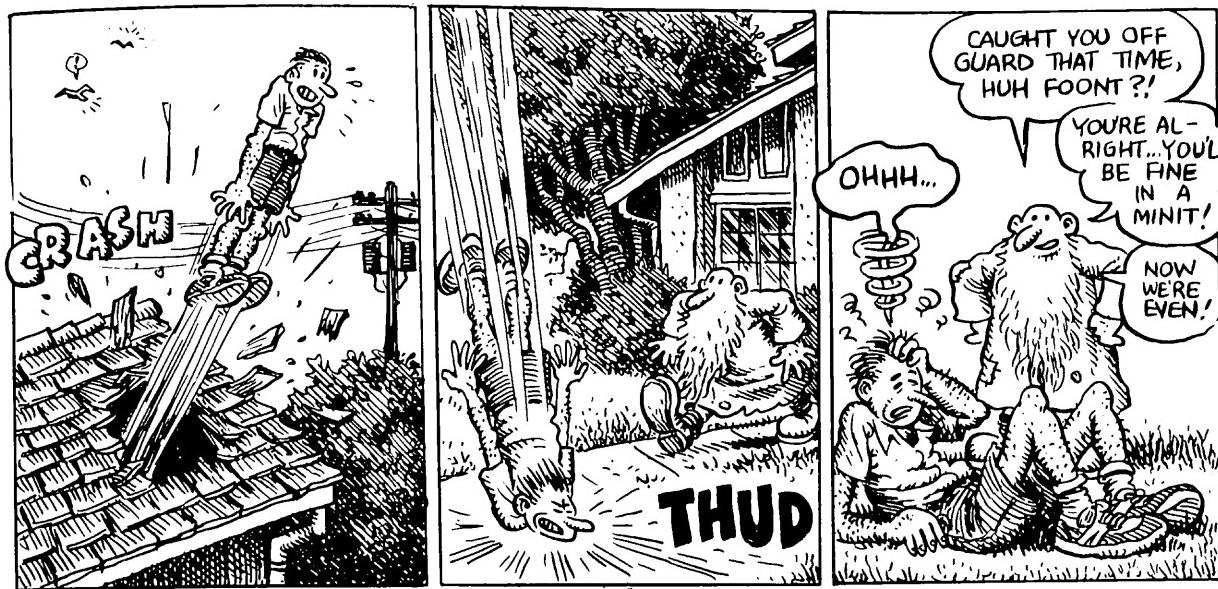


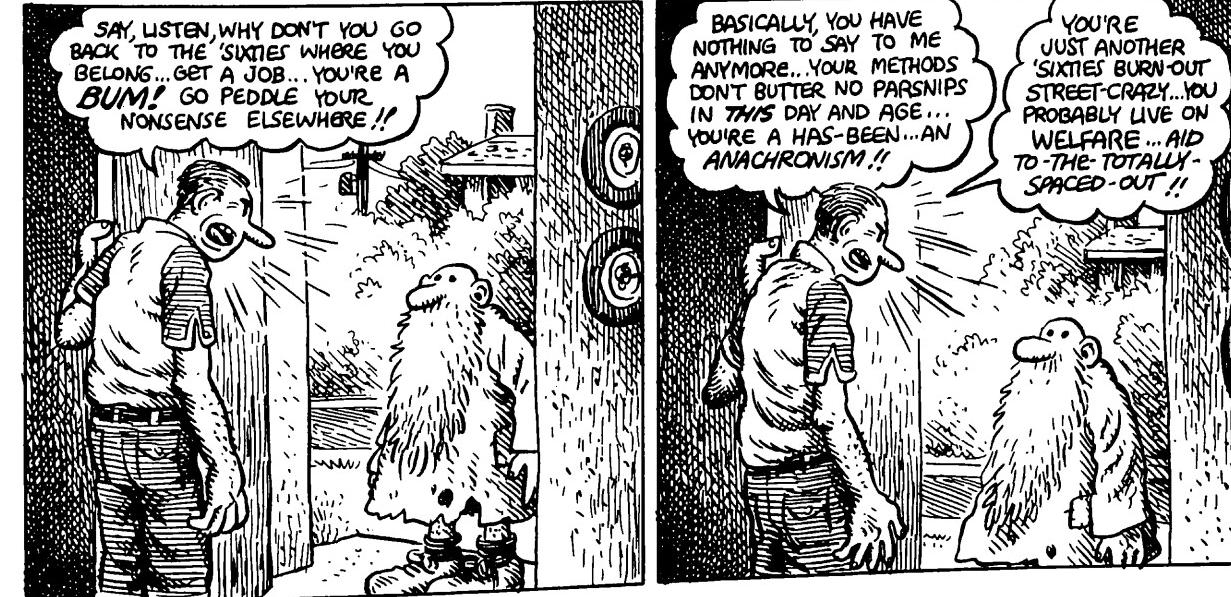
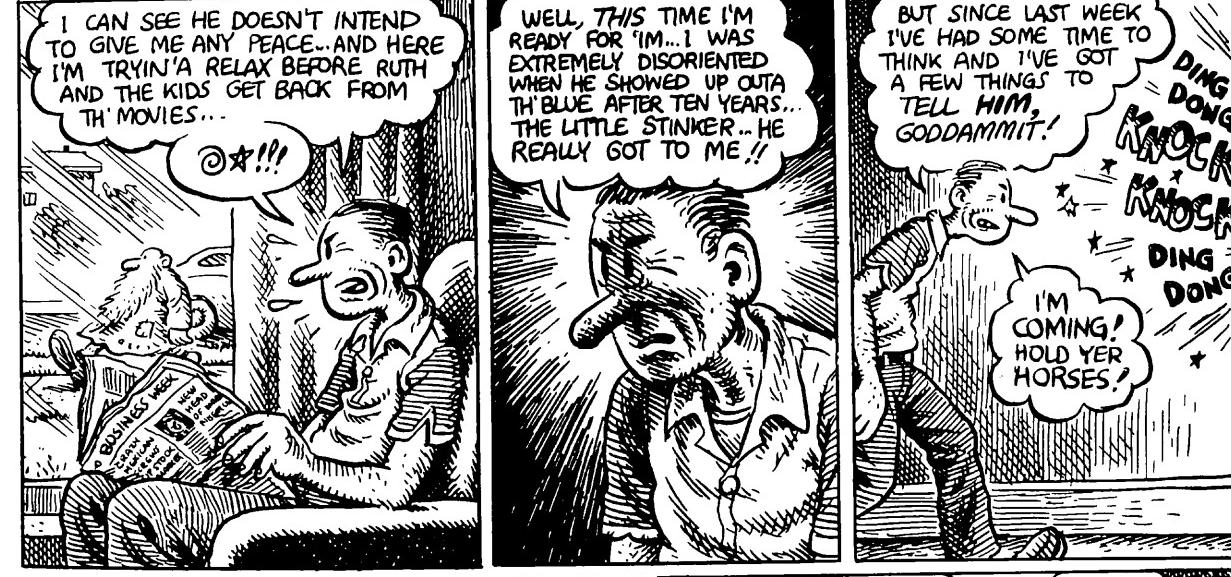
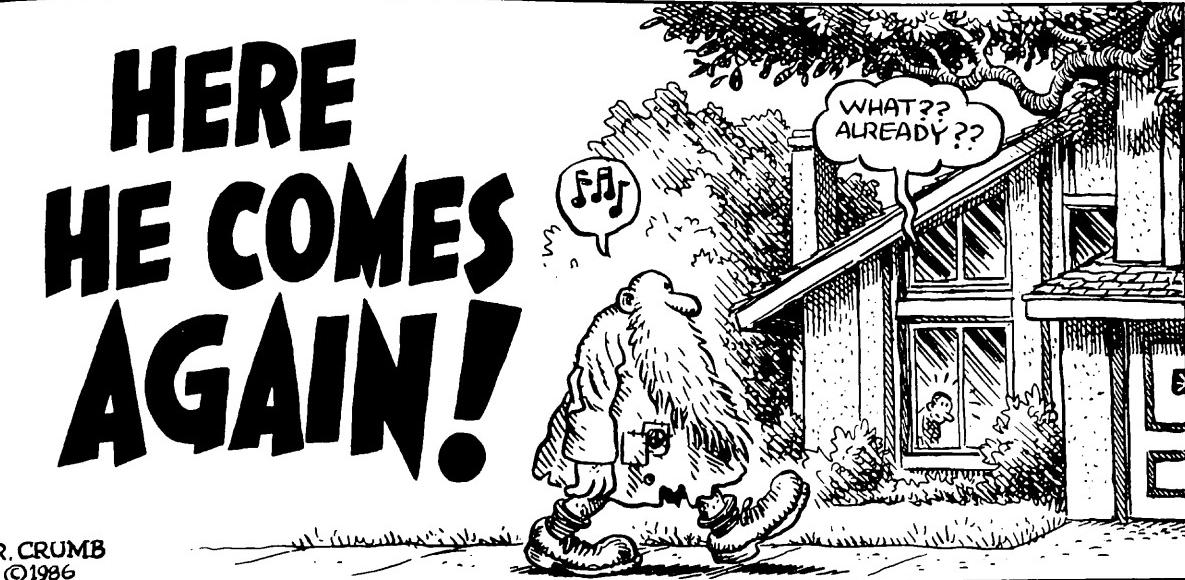
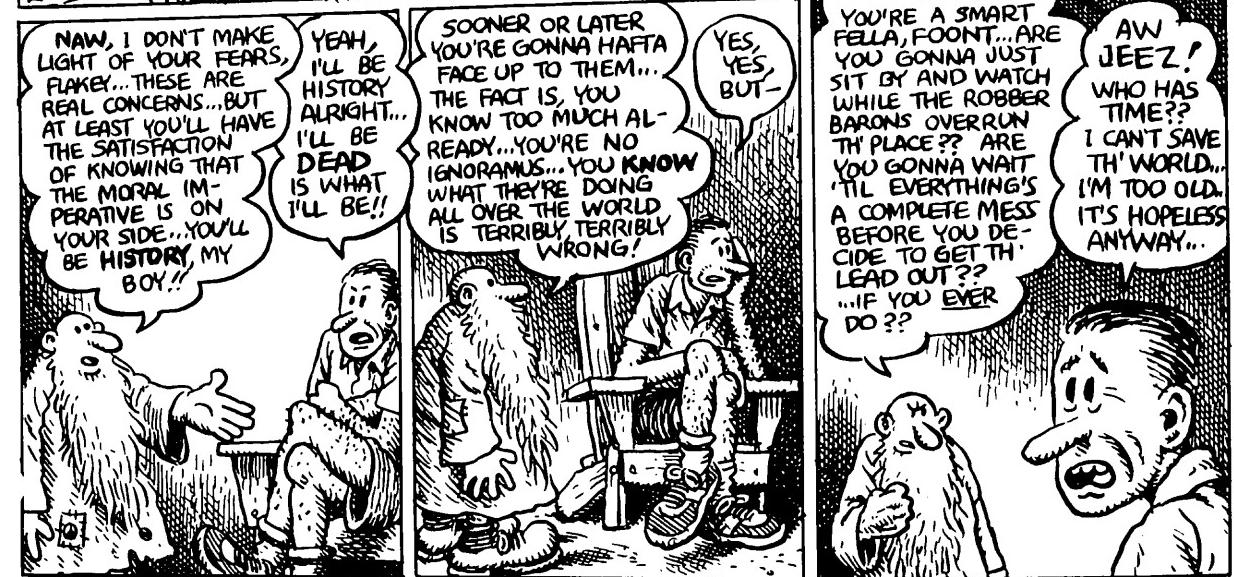
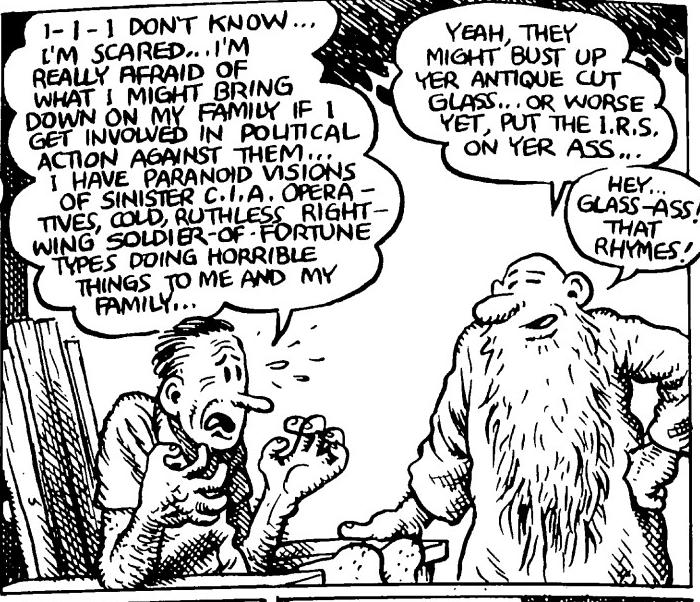
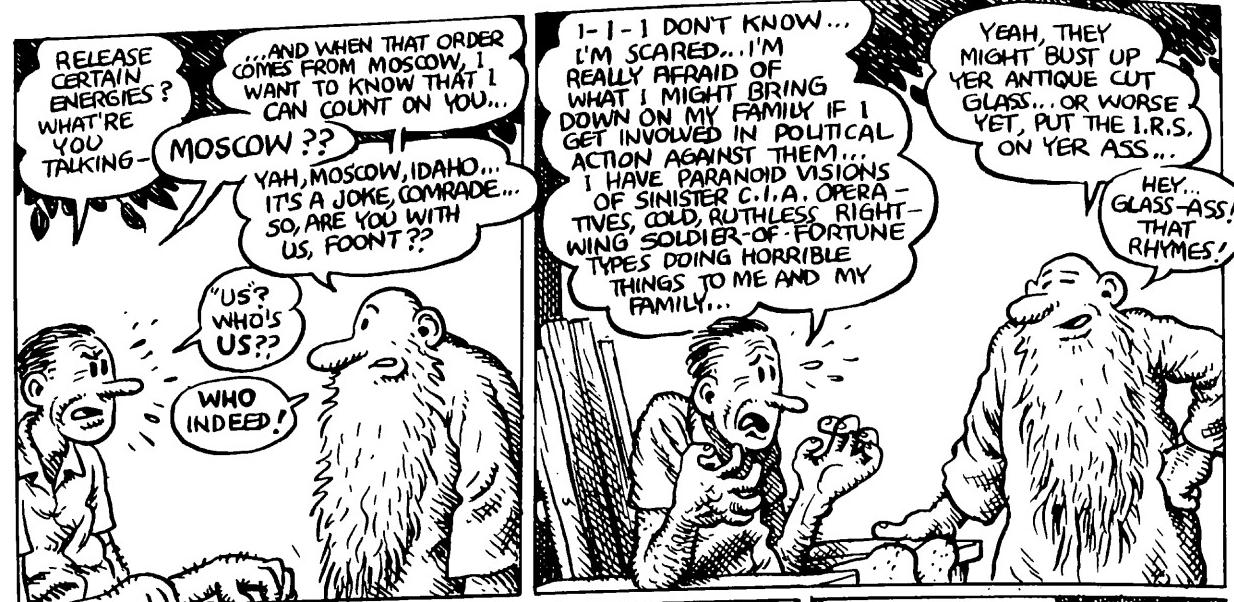














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